

MORAL TALES:

CONSISTING OF

THE RECONCILIATION,

A SKETCH OF THE BELVOIR FAMILY. A FAIRY TALE IN
THE MODERN STYLE.

CLEMENTIA AND MALITIA,

A FAIRY TALE IN THE ANCIENT STYLE.

CHARLES AND MARIA,

A NOVEL, FOUNDED ON FACT.

THE BEST HEART IN THE WORLD,

A NOVEL, THE OFFSPRING OF FANCY.

By JOSEPH MOSER, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE TURKISH TALES, AND HERMIT
OF CAUCASUS, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II

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THE HISTORY OF

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FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
IN TWO VOLUMES
BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY
OF THE BOSTON BAR
AND
JAMES B. BENTLEY
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PUBLISHED BY J. B. BENTLEY
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FAIRY TALE.

VOL. II.

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CLEMENTIA AND MALITIA,

FAIRY TALE.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

SOME time after the Emperor Saladin had established the government of the Mamelukes in Egypt, while the people were wavering between Infidelity, Mahometanism, and Christianity, each of which triumphed in their turns, there dwelled at Ghinnah, anciently Giene, a town situated near the Nile, a man of the name of Orgar. This person, who was about the middle age, had a large family, consisting of five daughters, and was of the profession of a *potter*, at which occupation he laboured so hard to support them, that his industry almost became a proverb through the district.

Although he was by no means of an aspiring turn of mind, yet as to his assiduity

was added a considerable share of ingenuity, he thought if he formed a little manufactory of his own, he should be able to turn his talents to a greater advantage. He accordingly, having saved a small sum of money, was debating in his mind, where he should begin the establishment that he had planned.—While in this dilemma, he was one evening walking out, when he saw a considerable crowd of people assembled in the market-place.—He ran amongst them, to inquire what had drawn them together, and found that they had surrounded two persons; one of whom had fainted, and was lying upon the ground, while the other, though nearly exhausted, was endeavouring to support him.

“What is the matter?” said Orgar.

“My master,” said the assistant, “overcome with fatigue, and oppressed with hunger, has sunk upon the earth; surely the charity for which ancient Egypt was so famous, has not fled before the conquering arms of the Califfs. Surely among the number assembled around, some one will afford us relief!”

“Why don’t you convey him to a house?” was a question from several.

“Because,”

"Because," replied the Squire, "we have been plundered of our money, and I have no means of procuring him necessaries, except by an application to your charity."

No sooner had he uttered these words than the greater part of the crowd shrunk from him, some without assigning any reason; others said, "We must give the poor traveller *air*, which is all that we can bestow; if we leave him to himself, he will soon be as able to walk out of the town as he was to walk into it."

"We walked into the town," said the Squire, "as into a place of shelter from the robbers who carried off our horses."

"Then the best thing you can now do," said two or three of the last that retreated, "is to carry off yourselves."

Orgar only remained, who happening to have the purse in his pocket which he had hoarded up for the establishment of his little manufactory, at this instant humanity rose in his bosom superior to prudence; he put it into the hand of the Squire, saying, "Apply this to the use of your Master, who seems to stand in need of every assistance; endeavour

to restore him to his speech, while I call some persons who will convey him to a place where he may obtain refreshment and rest."

Saying this, he left the Knight and Squire, and, with great mental exultation, as he had the hope that through his interference, a human being might be preserved, he summoned the servants of a large *Hann*. He ordered them to attend him with a hand-litter, and marched before them with increased consequence.—But what was his surprise, his mortification, to find the place abandoned: neither the Knight nor the Squire were to be seen. He searched the different avenues, and the porches of the houses around, without being able to discover the least trace of them.

The neighbours of Orgar, who had from a distance observed his liberality, again assembled around him.

"You have fetched the hand-litter for a special purpose," said one.

"I think the servants of the *Hann* can do no less than carry you back upon it, as a reward for your benevolence," said another.

"I

"I thought they were impostors, though I did not mention it," cried a third. "Robb'd indeed! a pretty story! Any one, who possessed a grain of sense, might see through the fallacy of such a pretext in an instant."

"Aye," replied a fourth, "when I saw neighbour Orgar give his purse, I whispered my wife, 'A fool and his money are soon parted.'—At this there was an universal laugh; and the poor potter, hanging down his head, without offering a word, sneaked to his own habitation.

He passed the night in disagreeable reflections, which were much aggravated in the morning, when his daughters came to ask him for money to purchase necessaries for the support of the family.

They were surprised to hear that he had parted with his all, and still more surprised, when he informed them how the objects of his benevolence had vanished from his sight. But they were too humane, and too dutiful, to murmur or repine.

After they had consulted a few minutes, Ardellia, the eldest, thus addressed Orgar.

“ I speak to you, my dear father, for my sisters and myself. We are sensible of the sorrow that oppresses you, and particularly hurt that the loss you have sustained should affect your spirits upon our account; knowing, as we do, that with the sum which you sacrificed to your sensibility, you intended to have embarked in a little undertaking, with a view to better the condition of us all. You have ever taught us to bow with humility to the decrees of Omnipotence, to act with a consciousness of rectitude, and to put our trust in Providence; it is now time to practise those lessons.—The sum you gave with a liberality which I hope will be an example to your daughters, has been, you think, bestowed upon impostors, and consequently can never answer the benevolent intention of the donor; but this by no means alters the benevolence of the motive for the donation. It has involved you in pecuniary distress; let it be our care to remove that as soon as possible. We have, you know, a number of superfluities, left us by our mother, and given us by friends and relations; let them all be sold; and though they may
not

not entirely replace the sum that you have lost, they may enable us, by their produce, to go on, till our industry, aided by Providence, shall more liberally provide for us."

Orgar, affected with this new instance of the duty of his daughters, embraced them with the raptures of a father. He for some time refused to avail himself of the assistance which he might derive from the sale of their few trinkets and ornaments; but a person who had heard of the transaction of the evening before, coming in to demand a small debt, he gave way to the pressure of necessity: the trinkets were disposed of, and as they produced a larger sum than they had been estimated at, Orgar again raised his head; again he began to think of his establishment.

Nothing was now wanting but a proper situation, and while he was looking out for a place, a friend informed him that a cottage, sheds, and garden, which would exactly suit him, were to be disposed of, on the bank of the canal of Copthos.

"If that be the case," said Orgar, "I will go and see them."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

ONE morning, just as the oblique rays of the sun began to gild the turrets of Ghinnah, and from thence spread over the undulating waves of the Nile, Orgar arose, and taking an affectionate leave of his daughters, he set out. He had tied his upper garment around him with a sash, and he carried a staff in his hand.

He travelled through the beautiful groves that decorated the banks of the river, and sometimes turned aside to contemplate in the vestiges of temples, fanes, broken pillars, and delapidated arches, the declension of the ancient grandeur of Egypt. He had nearly arrived at those immense masses of ruins, which mark what the town of Coptos once was, when his ears were assailed by the sound of human groans.—He started, and looking to the right, discovered a woman sitting upon a large stone, under a palm tree. He approached her; she seemed far advanced in life, and also to be attacked by some dreadful malady. She burnt and shivered as her disorder raged or intermitted. In the inter-

vals

vals of her groans, he besought her to inform him how he could administer to her relief. She answered him, that she was fast approaching to the last stage of her existence, and then began to groan more violently than before.

In a situation so sequestered, what could Orgar do? He looked around, and called for assistance, alas! in vain: he then pointed towards Copthos.

The woman said she had come from that place, where she had not been able to obtain any relief.

Disease, imbecility, and distress, were sufficient to banish every other idea from the mind of Orgar. The motive for which he had taken the journey was totally forgotten, and he thought of nothing but of administering that relief which the necessity of the poor woman seemed to require.

For this benevolent purpose, his own home he judged to be the properest place; he observed that she was thinly clad, so taking off his upper garment, he wrapped it around her, and supporting her with his arm, they began their march towards Ghinnah.

Though from the debility of his fellow-traveller the progress of Orgar was slow, they had the good fortune to arrive at the gate before the shades of the evening had much obscured the towers of the city.

Just as he was going to enter through the postern, the poor woman, seating herself upon a broken column, exclaimed that she was fainting, and cried, "Give me a drop of water." The benevolent Egyptian, frightened at her apparent agonies, picked up a large shell, and flew to the conduit. He returned in an instant, but the shell fell from his hand, when he discovered that the object of his charity had vanished from his sight.

He folded his arms, and stood at the gate wrapped in deep contemplation upon this event, when one of his acquaintance, who arrived on horseback, and was about to enter. Observing Orgar in that melancholy attitude, "What," said he, "do you stand in this place for almost undressed?" This put him in mind that he had parted with his upper garment to the woman, and that thought brought with it a still more unpleasant reflection, that in the pocket of that garment
was

was the purse which he had taken with him to purchase the cottage and necessaries for his profession at Copthos. These thoughts increased his melancholy sensations, to the enjoyment of which his *friend* left him; and going into the town, informed some of his companions of his situation.

They soon communicated the news to others; and many of the people, who had no better employment, came to see Orgar, the potter, standing at the gate without his clothes.

When he beheld them gathering around him, it awakened him from his reverie to a keener sense of his condition. He gave a last look after the poor woman, a sigh for his purse, and moved slowly towards his home, followed by the hisses and shouts of his townsmen.

Ardellia and her sisters saw him arrive; their first idea was, that some accident had befallen him: they observed his dejected look, and trembled while they embraced their father. He soon eased their fears with respect to his personal safety, but could not, that evening, summon up spirits sufficient
to

to inform them of the loss of his purse, and the melancholy termination of his journey.

The next morning, when money was wanting for domestic uses, as he had none wherewith to supply them, he was obliged to discover the whole of his misfortune. His daughters, who with eager ears had attended to the relation, expressed their concern more by their emotions than their words; they gathered together, and whispered each other; at last they beckoned Ardellia again to retire with them to consultation. She did so, and in a few minutes afterwards, in the name of herself and sisters, thus addressed her father:

“You seem, O my beloved parent! to be more concerned for this than for the former loss, although we have considered both, and think you have less reason.

“The Knight, though certainly an object of compassion, from illness and the pressure of temporary distress, had an attendant in whom he could probably confide, and who was administering to his relief; and though he had, as you thought, been robbed, and was oppressed with sickness, his
situ-

situation was by no means so deplorable as that of a woman advanced in life. You see I treat those phantoms as realities; who, a prey to disease, banished from the haunts of men, was in, perhaps, a dreary solitude alone, unattended!

“ If you have been again betrayed by the sensibility of your disposition; if you have again been deceived by appearances, your merit, in the eye of Omnipotence, is not the less. The human heart is, to man, inscrutable; yet woe and misery will ultimately attend the evil doers, while those that are deceived, and suffer by them, will ultimately be rewarded. All that now remains is to remedy the unfortunate circumstance that has deprived you of your purse. My sisters and myself have held a consultation, and have determined, that, as in our more prosperous days, our late mother's goodness and yours provided for us a far greater number of changes of apparel than are absolutely necessary, either for the purposes of cleanliness or decency, to sell a great part of them, and submitting the produce to your direction, we have little doubt, but, with the blessing
of

of Providence, it may, if applied as you intended, be the means of restoring our affairs."

When Ardellia ceased, her father said, "This is what I can never suffer, shall my children, now in the bloom of beauty, now arrived at the age when the female mind is not only delighted with, but requires to be indulged in those adventitious decorations which their charms derive from dress; at such a period shall they be suffered to divest themselves of the necessary, as they have already done of the ornamental part of their attire?"

"Believe me, my dear father!" said Ardellia, "the assistance which feminine charms derive from dress, is much inferior to what is generally imagined. There is a modesty, a sentiment, if I may so express myself, which resides in simplicity and neatness; without these form the basis of dress, all the flutter, the gewgaws, and female frippery, are rather calculated to create disgust than esteem: with those requisites, the coarsest apparel can never be totally divested of its power to please, therefore we must
insist

insist upon sacrificing our superfluities to the necessities of the present hour."

The other daughters of Orgar seconded the arguments of Ardellia; and if not convinced, at least overcome by his immediate distress, their father yielded.

All the finery of these young women was collected together; all the whole paraphernalia of their dress, except such garments as were absolutely necessary, was disposed of; and Orgar once more saw himself master of a sum sufficient, as he judged, for his purpose.

He now in earnest set about procuring a situation, to begin, upon a very contracted scale, his manufactory. The cottage and garden at Copthos, again recurred to his mind; so taking his staff in his hand, he once more set forward to view them: his daughters following him several paces from his door, with their prayers for his success.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

AS Orgar, the potter, walked along the bank of the Nile, he frequently put his hand upon his purse, which he had tied under his girdle, and reflecting that he had twice been a dupe to his sensibility, resolved to be more cautious in future. The day had but a few hours advanced ere he arrived at an obelisk, upon which some hieroglyphic characters recorded the history of the extraordinary inundations of the river; while one side served as a scale, marking the different heights to which the floods had arisen.

He stood a few minutes reflecting upon the bounty of Providence, and ejaculating his thanks to the Creator for thus dispersing fertility through the land.

“In what a variety of shapes,” said he, “doth the Almighty dispense his blessings to the inhabitants of the earth! The dew, the sunshine, the shower, are proofs of his beneficence! Nor are countries like Egypt, and many other parts of Africa, deprived of rain, less the objects of his care, which pervades the whole face of nature! In those he causes the river to swell, to overflow its banks, and

by

by a temporary inundation, diffuse plenty through various kingdoms and nations: then his omnipotent fiat goes forth, the floods are commanded to stop, they return to their former channels, the smiling harvest glads the soil, and the praises of a grateful people, ascend to heaven!"

As he stood absorbed in these reflections, he heard the shrill and piercing cry of infantile distress: he turned his eyes toward the river, and saw a small boat at a distance, in which was a child, driving at the mercy of the waves. The shrieks of the infant, who did not seem more than four or five years of age, pierced the heart of Orgar. He followed the boat as it drifted with rapidity down the stream, hoping to find some means to afford assistance to the child.

"Alas!" said he, "if the small vessel should be forced down the cataracts, the poor creature will, inevitably, be dashed to pieces!"

As he said this, he saw a fisherman near him, fastening his boat to a tree. Orgar pointed to the infant in distress, and urged him to fly to his relief.

"If

“If my boat should be crushed against the rocks, or lost in the rapids, who will pay me for it?” said the fisherman.

“I will!” replied Orgar.

“But if I should lose my life?”

“You will lose it in performing an action that I should glory in, had I the least skill in the management of a vessel, you will lose it in endeavouring to save that of a helpless innocent, and will meet with your reward above!”

“I must,” said the fisherman, “be rewarded *here*, before I attempt it, and nothing less than the contents of the purse which hangs to your girdle will satisfy me.”

At that instant the child screamed louder than before, Orgar put the purse into his hand, saying, “Go, rescue the infant from the danger it is in, for God will surely prosper so benevolent an undertaking.”

The boat seemed to fly from the shore, Orgar watched it with a variety of emotions: he saw it close to that which held the child: he turned up his eyes to heaven, as he ejaculated his thanks, and the next minute casting them upon the river, both
the

the object of his anxiety, and the fisherman, had vanished from his sight.

His distress was as poignant, as his joy had been great, he feared that they had sunk together into the abyss of waters, and continued watching by the side of the river, in the hope, that, at least, their bodies might rise to the surface; till the black clouds hanging upon the distant hills, and the thick haze upon the water, warned him to retire.

Pensive and slow he moved along the road: it was late in the evening before he arrived at his own habitation. His daughters, who translated his looks, judged that he had met with some disappointment, but respectfully forebore to enquire into griefs, which he did not seem to wish them to participate.

The gloom which oppressed the heart of Orgar, was little alleviated by the reflections of the night. He had again been betrayed by the benevolence of his temper, and had stripped his children of the advantages and the distinction that they had enjoyed, without attaining any good end by the sacrifice.

sacrifice. Ardellia and her sisters were prepared to meet him in the morning, they had determined what to do, and heard his story without any other emotion than what arose in their bosoms upon his account.

When he had concluded the recital, the eldest said, "We have, oh father! followed you through the tale with the feelings of sympathy, with admiration at the benignity of your heart! we shuddered at the danger of the infant, and, I hope, had we been in your situation, we should have exerted ourselves in the same manner. Whether the distress which you attempted to relieve was real, or the chimerical illusion of some spirit, the benevolence of your heart has been laudably exerted, and although it may be attended with some small inconvenience, the consciousness of having acted right, ought to support you under it."

"Inconvenience, children!" said the father in the greatest agony; "have I not parted with our *all*? what have we now to depend upon?"

"Our own industry!" replied Ardellia, "those exertions which necessity calls forth,
and

and which frequently restore plenty to the table, whence poverty had banished it. It is true that we have no money, except these few medins, which you yesterday left with us; but we have that which many, who possess thousands, would think them well exchanged for; I mean health, activity, and, I hope, talents to procure our own subsistence.

“You must now, my dear father! give up the plan of establishing yourself, and return to work for Coloes. We must also endeavour to assist you, and heaven will, doubtless, crown our industry with success.”

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

ORGAR took the advice of his daughters, and, after embracing and blessing them, repaired to the immense manufactory of Coloes, where, as his ingenuity was well known, he immediately obtained a respectable situation. As soon as he was gone, Ardellia said to her sisters, “Here are five of us, and though there is little doubt but that our father will be engaged, shall we indolently

lently continue a useless burthen upon him? No! rather let us endeavour to second his exertions by our own industry; by which means he may be able, in a short time, to attempt again, with, perhaps, better success, the scheme in which he has been so often disappointed."

The sisters acquiesced, and three of them accompanied Ardellia to the manufactory, while the other remained at home, to arrange the domestic affairs of the family.

If Orgar was surprised at the arrival of his daughters, he was no less so at their dress; their luxuriant hair was confined under bonnets, formed of a kind of rush, which they had manufactured; their coarse white drapery, was tied around their waists, with bandages as coarse, they wore loose upper robes which fell over their shoulders, and concealed their lovely bosoms and arms down to the wrist: Yet could not the homeliness of their apparel hide the natural elegance of their forms. Their beauty was of a description which disdained that kind of consequence which is derived from art, and, struck with the assemblage of charms which flashed upon him, Coloes approached them, with

with the same respect that he would have paid to Egyptians of the greatest dignity.

Ardellia, in behalf of herself and sisters, in a few words, informed him of the purport of their visit, which was to obtain employment. She said, that they had been a little used to make designs in imitation of the beautiful kind of ware at that time manufactured in Egypt, and they doubted not, but that, with practice, they should be able to execute them; they therefore wished to be allowed to make a trial of their abilities in the room where their father was employed.

Though Coloes, when he agreed to their proposal, was astonished at the application, he was still more astonished when he beheld the first pieces that they executed. Never had any thing so beautiful been produced by the artists whom he had employed: their fruit, flowers, landships vied with the choicest and most glowing productions of nature.

The ornaments which flowed from their pencils, displayed the purest Grecian taste, and their figures the correctness of the Athenian school: all the Egyptian distortion va-

nished before their animated touches, and a spirit seemed almost to breathe in their works, which not only surpris'd their master and father, but indeed themselves.

The celebrity annexed to the wonderful talents of the daughters of Orgar was soon spread abroad, as the pieces they had executed were dispersed. Their works soon became the fashion, not only in Egypt, but in all the countries around. Coloes doubled, nay trebled their emoluments; with the same the wealth of the family encreased, and they soon became far more opulent than ever.

But the ingenuity of the daughters of Orgar was not the only object of admiration, his talents had improved in the same proportion, he had ascended to the higher branches of the art, and was chiefly employed in making models for the other manufacturers to work after.

The ingenuity and industry of this family had so raised the credit of the fabrication, executed by and under their inspection, that the beautiful specimens of Egyptian ware, which they daily produced, were not only purchased with avidity by their cotemporaries,

raries, but have been handed down to their posterity, and have obtained places in the collections of the curious, where they remain, as monuments of their talents, and are considered as the more singular, because they were produced at a period when the arts, which had risen in the African to illuminate in their turns the Asian and European world, had from war and other causes been eclipsed, and, in a great degree, receding from the earth, had left to this æra the emphatical title of the *Age of Darknefs*.

One day when the father, with his family around him, were pursuing their different vocations, the conversation among them, which had partaken of the hilarity that reigned in their hearts, turned upon love, marriage, and their future settlement in life. Orgar, who had not entirely given up his scheme of an establishment, said,

“Heaven has surely blessed me through the merits and for the sake of my children! Never was man so happy in his offspring as I am! Never had man daughters so ingenious, so observant of their religious and moral duties, so affectionate to their parent, so modest, and yet so beautiful.”

The girls blushed and gathered around him.

“Blush not my children,” he continued, “at praises you so well deserve. Did I only consult my own interest and happiness, I should pray to God that we might ever continue together: but away with such a selfish idea! Providence, for the wisest of purposes, decrees, that families should separate; that, from the different branches taking root, other families should be formed, by which means the race of mankind is continued, and the progression of the world suffers no impediment. I make these observations, as you are now at periods of life when young women become objects of the attention and solicitation of our sex, and to make a proper application of a matter which you had slightly touched upon among yourselves. Tell me, therefore, oh my daughters! if among the youth that have endeavoured to find favour in your sight, any have been happy enough to become the subjects of your contemplation?”

The modesty for which the Egyptian virgins were famed was never more conspicuous than in this instance; they blushed deeper

deeper than before, nay, when they met the scrutinizing eye of their father, theirs fell under it, and they covered their faces with their hands.

Orgar was too good a judge of human nature, and knew too well the emotion which his question must excite in delicate minds, to interrupt a silence proceeding from sensibility. He waited with patience till Ardellia, wiping away the tear of tenderness, said,

“Perhaps, the hardest part of the confession which you require of us, would arise from the implication to which it is liable, and the construction to which our words would be subject, were we to say, that we had seen men whom we prefer to others.

“Would not such a declaration, to minds less liberal than yours, seem to indicate that a wish had arisen in our bosoms to leave our father? Yet that is by no means the case. For though we have each formed in our minds an idea that we could be happy with a particular object, those objects are, by fortune, placed so far above us, that were we to tell you their names, you would be

convinced that our ideas were equally girlish and chimerical; therefore, though we are used to lay open our hearts to our father, in this, I dare say, he will excuse us."

"That is impossible," said Orgar, "I must be informed whom the persons are that you have chosen, and I am glad that you have raised your thoughts above your present condition. May your virtuous wishes be realized; but though that is not likely to happen speedily, there can be no harm in telling me the names of the parties to whom we have alluded."

The sisters looked at each other; at last Ardellia said; "Spare us, oh, father! the confusion that would arise from mentioning names, and be content with such a view of our ideal lovers as the creative hand of fancy has drawn:—Here," she continued, timidly presenting some leaves of the *papyrus*, "are sketches, executed by my sisters and myself, of the men with whom we should wish to pass our lives."

Orgar looked at the first, he knew it instantly: "This," said he, "is the figure of Coloes. How beautifully is it delineated!

How

How strong is the likeness!" Ardellia blushed and retired behind her sisters.

He proceeded to the next: "This," said he, "executed by my second daughter Emilia, it is as easy to know as the other, and brings to my view the benevolent Alaric, who was, during the short time that the Christians were masters of the town, Governor of Ghinnah." The blushes of Emilia rose as high as those of her sister, when she also retired a few paces.

He opened the third: "Let us see," he cried, "the performance of Sophia; I know this portrait, it is that of Alexander, the merchant of Memphis, who annually visits this part of Egypt.

"I see two names inscribed," he continued, looking at the back of the fourth: Doria and Felicia!"

"The reason of that is;" said Doria, with great diffidence, "because the drawing contained in that roll is the joint production of my sister, who is absent, and myself."

"Let me examine into this matter," returned Orgar, unrolling it: "Sure you wish for more than one lover betwixt you.

Heavens ! What do I see ! My own portrait !
What can be the meaning of this ?”

“ The meaning of it,” said Doria, blushing and trembling ; “ is, my dear father ! to shew you, that, at the very early age of Felicia and myself, it would be extremely improper for us to entertain a thought of any other lover.

“ When my dear mother departed to the regions of bliss, she bequeathed her love and affection to you, as a legacy amongst her daughters. Well have our sisters executed their parts of the precious trust ; they have performed their duty, let us perform ours ! The time approaches fast when they will, probably, be called into the world ; when they will visit new scenes, form new connexions, have new claims upon their hearts !

“ Let it then be our care to supply their places, to attend upon our father, direct his domestic affairs ; endeavour to repress his anxiety, and blunt, as much as possible, his feelings for the loss he has, and those he will sustain, when bereft of their society. While we are pursuing this delightful task, can we wish for any other call upon our affections,

! never!!

at

at least, till, by the attention of years, we have deserved that he shall guide, direct, and confirm that choice which, he may think, has been the result of that reflection, consequent to a maturer period of our lives?"

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

STRUCK with what he had seen and heard, Orgar embraced his daughters, saying, "Sure my children you are all inspired with the ingenuity and wisdom which the poets fabled that goddess to possess," at the same time pointing to a small figure of Minerva, which he had just formed out of clay. At that instant a flash of lightning pervaded the room, thunder rolled over their heads, the statue rose in its height, its dimensions extended; Orgar and his daughters shrank aghast, the figure seemed in one moment animated, and the next, a beautiful female form stepped from the pedestal.

The children of Orgar, in their elegant researches, had often remarked a butterfly

rising from the chrysalis, its wings expanding, its colours every minute brightning, and displaying, as struck with the solar beam, the vivid radiance of nature: so the figure that stood before them every moment acquired brilliancy. Her under dress was of pale straw colour, over which, in the most elegant drapery, hung a purple robe fringed with gold: her helmet shone with precious stones, and while her hair flowed in unbounded luxuriance upon her shoulders, over her head the plumes of the ostrich wantoned in the wind: her eyes were blue, and from them beamed the emanations of mildness and benignity.

She waved her spear, the terrors of Orgar and his family increased, she touched them with it, and held up her shield, which appeared a polished mirror, their minds seemed to acquire strength, and their fears vanished before the resplendence of that orb.

She again waved her spear, and they encircled her, while she addressed them in the following words:

“ You behold at least, oh Orgar, one of the fables of the poets realized! but, although

though I have taken the form of Minerva, I would not have you mistake me for that goddess. I am the fairy Clementia! of an inferior race of deities to the gods of the ancient mythology; we have, since their secession, been called into action, and have our different stations assigned us. While some are appointed to guide the course of the planets, to watch the operations of nature, to elate or dismay armies; mine, and that of other subordinate beings, is to attend the middle rank of the human race. A less glorious, but far more pleasing task, than falls to the lot of those that have the care of the daring spirits, who, in upper life, astonish and confuse the world; or of those miserable wretches, who seem to be created only to excite the compassion of their fellow creatures.

“These, oh Orgar, you have frequently relieved, your benevolence had for a long time become interesting to me, as I had observed it extended to every object that came within your sphere. Nor had your industry been less conspicuous, though I had frequently lamented that your laudable exertions

tions had been repressed, and your most arduous efforts counteracted, by the gnome Malitia, whom Providence, for the wisest of purposes, sometimes permits to harass, thwart and plague the human race.

“ With passions almost mortal often have I felt, and as often endeavoured to alleviate your temporary distresses; at last the gnome, whom I had opposed, resenting my interference, it came to an open rupture between us. Our disagreement rent the region of middle-air, roused all the fays, fairies, sylphs, demons and genii, and made a confusion in the elements, which, to you inhabitants of the lower world, seemed a storm.

“ As the spirits celestial and terrestrial took different sides, the war raged far and wide, till the unsettled state of our fantastic empire made it necessary to compromise the matter. It was then decreed, by the power who rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm, that Malitia should, for a certain time, exert the whole of her influence against yourself and family; that she should thwart you in your favorite pursuit, involve you in distress, subject your children to the
incon-

inconveniences attendant upon poverty, and place you in situations where you should, for the efforts of your sensibility, be exposed to ridicule.

If, during this period, you conducted yourself, as I asserted you would; if the piety, and industry of your family rose superior to the evils of the hour; if the necessities of the times called from their minds sentiments, from their hands exertions, equally uncommon and laudable, Malitia was to withdraw her influence, and I was to take you for ever under my protection.

“ In consequence of this arrangement we acted in conjunction, and although duplicity was disagreeable to me, I joined with her to frustrate your favourite scheme. We first attracted your benevolent regard, in the characters of the Knight and Squire in the market-place.

“ We thought, that by obtaining your purse, we had repressed your ideas of independence; but you will judge of my surprise, and the indignation of Malitia, when she found she had a new power to oppose; a power strong as her own, which rose in the piety and heroism of your daughters, for she

con-

considered it as heroism for girls to divest themselves of ornamental superfluities.

“ As by their means you had obtained another purse, she resolved to extract it from you, and took the form of the poor woman, to whose convenience you sacrificed your garment. Confusion seized her, when your daughters again relieved your pecuniary difficulties by parting with their clothes. Thinking that they had nothing now to oppose to her machinations, she persuaded me to join her in the next experiment: Under the forms of the child in the boat and the fisherman, we again obtained your purse, but Malitia was again disappointed, as she found from experience that yourself and daughters had ingenuity and industry sufficient to defeat the malice of the whole herd of gnomes: Yet loth to retreat, though foiled, she hovered around you, till, tired with beholding the innocence of your lives, and the benevolence of your hearts, she, this morning, broke the wand by which she held her empire, and, resigning your future days to my guidance and direction, has fled far away.

Orgar

Orgar and his family prostrated themselves before the fairy, and intreated her protection.

“ Rise !” she said, touching each of them with her spear, “ the virtuous and benignant are the peculiar favourites of Providence, and the peculiar care of Clementia ! You have endured trials, and, like gold refined in the furnace, have, from the assays made upon you, come forth brighter, and doubly purified.

“ My first care must be an act of justice, for such I deem the restitution of these three purses. Take them, Orgar, you will find that their contents have increased since they have been in my possession ; apply them according to the dictates of your benevolent heart, and be assured they never will diminish.

“ I must next endeavour to render your future days happy, and the surest way to promote that desirable end will be to place you in the situations you have chosen.”

The daughters of Orgar blushed while the fairy proceeded.

“ For you,” addressing the father, “ I know it has long been the wish of your heart to undertake a manufactory like this
of

of Coloes; your humility would have been well satisfied to have practised your profession upon a very contracted scale. You have been thwarted in your attempts, that never will happen again. Your art will be improved, your commerce extended, and be carried to a height heretofore unknown in Egypt."

Orgar, oppressed with gratitude, knelt to the fairy: "Vouchsafe," said he, "most benignant Clementia! to inform me where I shall fix my residence?"

"On this spot!" she replied, "this whole establishment now calls you master!"

"Not to the prejudice of Coloes I hope!" said Orgar.

"Surely not!" rejoined Ardellia; "the humanity, the justice of Clementia, would not punish one, who, I flatter myself, has never offended her: What must become of him?"

"We shall see that instantly," said the fairy, and, striking her spear upon the ground, Coloes immediately appeared.

"Now," she continued, addressing Ardellia, "let me hear what you can say in his defence."

"Not

“Not knowing the crime he has been guilty of,” she replied: “it is impossible I can make any, and if I did know in what he is culpable, it would, in your presence, be presumptuous to defend him: Let me only be allowed to hope that it is some slight trespass; for surely one so good, so just, so merciful, could not be guilty of a great offence.”

“You shall judge,” said the fairy, “I am always offended when mortals suffer their scruples to repress the warm emotions of their hearts. I know that Coloes has long loved Ardellia; and I also know that he has been withheld from a declaration of his passion, by the fear that she should think he took advantage of her distress to propose what she had not the power to refuse. I shall not betray the secrets of Ardellia, her blushes say every thing; therefore, my children! as you are born for each other, I join your hands, certain of the approbation of Orgar.”

While Coloes poured out the effusions of his heart at the shrine of the lovely Ardellia, the fairy proceeded, “I repeat it, that Orgar from this hour is master of this manufactory. It has long been the wish of
Coloes

Coloes to retire to an estate upon the banks of the Nile: thither he will conduct his bride, and take with him this scrawl as a marriage present, which, in the right of his wife, invests him with the extensive demesnes which he has frequently desired to have added to it.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THREE times the fairy struck the ground with her spear, and at the third summons Alaric appeared.

Emilia retired behind her sister, till Clementia waved her hand, and said,

“This union will give me less trouble than the other, as Alaric has already declared his passion. The generosity of the offer he made Emilia, could only be exceeded by her motive for refusing it; she would not, by accepting of an affluent situation, leave her father and sisters in distress: but as distress will be for ever banished from the house of Orgar, her reason, however laudable,

ble, for delaying the happiness of Alaric, is done away. And, as I know what I am about to do is agreeable to every party, I here join the hands of two lovers, whose hearts have long been united.

"My children," she continued, "may your bliss in the nuptial, be equal to your deserts in the single state!"

Alaric and Emilia, upon their knees, returned thanks to the fairy, and while they received the blessing of Orgar, and the congratulations of his daughters, she summoned Alexander into her presence.

"For what purpose," said she, "did you make that secret purchase of the cottage at Copthos, a place of which Orgar had been twice disappointed, and had twice lost his purse, when he went to bargain for it?"

Alexander blushed, and, after some hesitation, said, "I had in my periodical residence at Ghinnah, frequently seen Sophia. My heart was attracted even by her infantile graces, and I made love to her, before she knew the meaning of that word: When I became more acquainted with her, and discerned her piety, her duty, and the beauties

ties of her mind, the love which her personal charms first excited was changed to admiration of her virtues, and I became more pressing in my solicitation.

"I heard of the disappointment of Orgar from his daughter, who informed me that she meant to share the fate of the family: I therefore wished to make a secret purchase of the cottage and its dependencies, and present them to her father."

"As the father of Sophia," said the fairy, "is more amply provided for, and you wish for a situation near this town, you shall take up your residence at the place which was a cottage, but as a reward for, and monument of your generosity, is now changed to a palace."

"I see, by your countenance, that a palace, in your estimation, would have no attractions, unless inhabited by the fair Sophia; therefore take her Alexander, and, in future, may your domestic and commercial concerns be equally prosperous."

"I have summoned Felicia into my presence, to say a few words to her, and Doria."

"Lovely, and beloved children," she continued,

tinued, taking a hand of each; “ the choice you have made is pleasing to me, and the reasons you gave for making it, still more so: you shall, for a few years, remain not only the ornaments of your father’s house, but of the city; in which your piety, prudence, and virtue, shall become as eminently conspicuous as your beauty; and at the end of that period, it shall be my care to form an establishment for you, equal, if possible, to your deserts.

“ Having now disposed of the family, I hope to the satisfaction of every part of it; I have nothing to wish, but that you may all bear the prosperity that I foresee will attend your elevated, as well as you have the comparative adversity of your more humble station, and of which, from the benignity of your minds, and the integrity of your hearts, I have not the least doubt.

“ The longest period annexed to mortal existence is but a span, when opposed to immortality! keep this axiom always in your minds, and continue to live so, that when Providence thinks proper to call you from your terrestrial abodes, you may, by your
purity

purity and virtue, be prepared to enjoy the bliss which the pious and benevolent will find in the celestial mansions."

At this instant the fairy broke her spear; thunder shook the dome, lightning flashed around, and she vanished from their sight.

Overpowered with the radiance, the astonished Orgar, his daughters and their lovers, prostrated themselves upon the ground: after some minutes spent in ejaculation, they arose, and embracing each other, prepared to celebrate the nuptials according to the intentions of the benignant fairy. Orgar became the master of the manufactory, and under his influence the arts and commerce were extended to a degree heretofore unknown in Egypt. Every branch of the family was equally successful. And when Clementia, many years after, visited the city, and her votaries asked her the reason why the house of Orgar, in opulence, in power, and riches, flourished far beyond any other in the district? she answered them, "Because they have been superior in their piety and virtue; firmer in their reliance upon Providence; have not suffered even adversity to repress

repress their benevolence, and have discovered the true use of riches, as they make the same application of them in a moral, as the Omnipotent doth of the Nile, in a physical sense; letting their charity flow like the streams of that river, and dispensing their wealth, in the shape of benefits, over the whole country.

FINIS.

The first of these is the fact that the
 population of the country is increasing
 rapidly. This is due to a number of
 causes, including a high birth rate,
 a low death rate, and a large influx
 of immigrants. The second fact is that
 the country is becoming more and more
 industrialized. This is due to the
 fact that the country has a large
 supply of raw materials, and a large
 number of factories. The third fact is
 that the country is becoming more and
 more urbanized. This is due to the
 fact that the country has a large
 number of cities, and a large number
 of people living in them.

CHARLES AND MARIA;

OR, THE

UNFORTUNATE ATTACHMENT:

A NOVEL,

FOUNDED ON FACT.

.....LAY HAND ON HEART, ADVISE
IF YOU BE MINE, I'LL GIVE YOU TO MY FRIEND;
IF YOU BE NOT, HANG, BEG, STARVE, DIE I' THE STREETS,
FOR, BY MY SOUL, I'LL NE'ER ACKNOWLEDGE THEE,
NOR WHAT IS MINE SHALL EVER DO YOU GOOD.

VOL. II.

D

CHARLES AND MARIA;

OR, THE

UNFORTUNATE ATTACHMENT;

A NOVEL,

FOUNDED ON FACT.

.....I AM SURE OF THAT, AND
I DON'T SEE HOW I CAN BE ANY OTHER
TO YOU BE NOT, HAVING BEEN, WITH THE STORIES
TOLD BY MY FATHER, AND THE APOLOGIES, THAT
YOU WHAT IS WITH ME, AND DO YOU KNOW.

D

VOL. II.

UNFORTUNATE ATTACHMENT.

THERE is no duty more frequently urged, or more strongly inculcated, by the tenets of religion, the principles of morality, and the general voice of nature, than that of obedience to the authors of our being:

The commands of parents have in all ages and nations been deemed a tie inferior only to those of the Almighty; but then it has always been presupposed that those commands have had their foundation upon reason and religion, that they have not been dictated by caprice, nor been urged to counteract a virtuous and laudable propensity, still less a *solemn vow*.

The obligations we are under to those that gave us being, the reverence, affection

and duty which we owe to the authors of our existence, are, or ought to be, sacred : we should, especially in the early period of life, look up to them as our guides, instructors and protectors ; we should suffer our minds and manners to be formed by their plastic hands, and, like wax, receive the impression which their virtues and accomplishments stamp upon us : at the same time, the duty of parents should be reciprocal ; they should in every respect endeavour to promote the happiness of their offspring ; and even if, notwithstanding their precepts and example, their children should have deviated from the strict line of duty, they should remember that perfection is not the lot of humanity ; and, sacrificing their resentment at the shrine of tenderness, endeavour to bring them back to the path from which they have strayed.

Unfortunate Maria ! a martyr to parental rigidity ! How often hath the Cambrian maiden, as she hath crossed the mountain, turned pale as she approached the scene of thy woe, and bathed her cheeks with tears, whilst she contemplated the monument
which

which the parents of Charles hath raised as a memorial of thy fate, and of that of thy husband !

How often have the youthful pair, even at the height of joy and hilarity, been seized with woe, as they came in sight of the mansion of thy father ; and turning aghast from an object which, by recalling thy sorrows to their minds, excited that sensibility, those sympathetic feelings, which glow in the bosoms of the virtuous, retired to their home in silence and dejection !

In a village one of the most rural and romantic of many which adorn that part of Wales, upon which the bountiful hand of Nature has lavished the greatest share of beauty and fertility, the county of Glamorgan, lived a gentleman, whose respectable family appellation we shall, for good reasons, conceal under the fictitious name of Asper. He was a man of considerable property, the possessor of an estate upon the southern coast of Cambria, and of a mansion, which, though it was large enough to denote the opulence of its owner, that consideration was lost by those who saw it, in the contemplation of

the beauty of its situation; which was near the summit of a considerable elevation, from which the Bristol channel, and the views over the northern coast of Devonshire, were unbounded. The prospect in front might be compared to a moving picture, which changed with every gale, and discovered vessels laden with the produce and manufactures of Britain, sailing to foreign markets, or returning, fraught with the treasures of the four quarters of the globe, to enrich this emporium of the world.

High as the mansion of Penstock was situated, the back of it seemed immersed in the trees of a wood, which climbed to the very apex of the mountain, and formed a beautiful ground to the white towers of the building. Steep as was the ascent to the house, it was laid out in gardens; the rocks in one part appeared a grand and striking feature, as did clumps of various trees in another; while, falling from a height, a river ran at the bottom, and bounded the whole.

In this terrestrial paradise, as has been observed, lived Mr. Asper: he was a man in
the

the prime of life, a widower, the father of one child, a daughter, who seemed designed by the hand of Nature to adorn a spot upon which that goddess had so liberally dispensed her beauties.

Maria Asper had been from her infancy considered as fairest in a country "where all are fair."

When the graces which had adorned her early years expanded, and the lovely child became the accomplished maiden; when her figure had attained that elegant symmetry for which it was so remarkable, her features settled into that delicate proportion for which they were so admired, all the ideas which had in her infancy been formed of her beauty, were realized, and even her father, in his moments of fondness, which were few, considered her as a model of perfection. Perhaps it will here be necessary to make an observation, as it might be naturally supposed that a parent's eye would be the first to see and to admire the beauty of a daughter. This, however true in general, was by no means the case with Mr. Asper: he had early in life formed an attachment, which he

was obliged to sacrifice to the stern command of a father; and, contrary to his inclination, marry the mother of Maria. This circumstance had increased the peevishness of a disposition naturally morose, and had, during the few years they lived together, rendered a woman unhappy, who was a pattern of humility and virtue.

When Mrs. Asper died, the ill-humour with which he had treated her, was in a great degree transferred to her daughter; and, what was worse, it seemed to increase with the years of Maria.

It has been truly observed, that it was impossible he could be blind to her personal attractions, or deaf to those praises which her gentle manners and elegant accomplishments excited; but, though they did not induce him to love her better, they served him as an excuse to himself for watching her conduct with the most scrupulous and jealous attention. He had in his youth been a martyr to parental tyranny; he therefore resolved to exert the same uncontrouled dominion over the passions of his daughter. For this reason, he almost confined her to the mansion; commanded her

never

never to make a female acquaintance, but such as he pointed out; and as to male, they were totally forbidden.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

IN the village where the house of Mr. Asper was situated, dwelt a gentleman of the name of Edwin, the younger brother of a family of considerable importance in the principality. He was a man of letters, and, what was better, of honour and piety.

He had early in life entered into the army, and gathered a plentiful harvest of laurels, both in Germany and more remote parts of the globe; with which, and a Captain's half-pay, he had retired to a small house near the place of his nativity.

As the patrimony of Captain Edwin was small, and the expeditions in which he had been engaged, though hazardous, unproductive, his circumstances were consequently far from affluent. However, he had too much religion and philosophy, to repine at

a situation in which he enjoyed more of fortune's gifts than he wanted; nor, although several advantageous matches offered, did he seek to increase his wealth by matrimony; on the contrary, he married the daughter of a senior officer, who had nothing to recommend her but virtue, talents, and beauty. This connection was, by his elder brother, who considered money as the *summum bonum* of human happiness, thought so imprudent, that he resolved to cast him off; and, from that time, discontinued any intercourse with him.

Mr. Asper had made the same his ostensible reason for declining the acquaintance of the Captain; but, in fact, he had another, which, though impervious to the world, was not hidden from the Historic Muse: she knew, and whispered us, that Miss Glanville, the Lady that the Captain had married, was the individual fair, for whom the father of Maria had formed an early attachment, but who had never considered him in any other light than that of a common acquaintance. However, notwithstanding the fraternal frown, and the coldness of an

an interested friend, the marriage commenced under the happiest auspices. The humble dwelling of Captain Edwin, though it could not vie in magnificence with those of his brother and of Mr. Asper, in the beauties of nature by which it was surrounded was equal, and in the happiness of its inmates, greatly superior.

The river which bounded the demesnes of the latter, flowed also by the cottage of the Captain, from the banks of which, a gravel walk, fringed with honey-suckles, and other odoriferous shrubs, led up to the house, which was situated in the midst of a garden: That part of the little plantation that was in the front, was laid out in beautiful parterres of flowers, of which he was immoderately fond; and that behind dedicated to culinary uses.

He had a paddock on one side, and an orchard on the other, and the house, like those of that country, was whitened, though the glare of it was considerably softened by the vines and other clinging plants with which it was almost covered. It was also defended from the north, and north-east winds, by a

large clump of majestic oaks, whose aspiring boughs were, on the other side, contrasted by the fantastic twinings of several stunted walnut trees.

At nearly the end of the first year of his parents marriage, in this mansion of peace and happiness, was born Charles Edwin, whose adverse fate we have taken upon ourselves the task of recording. Mrs. Edwin had two children besides, but as they died in their infancy, their remembrance only served to rivet the chain of their parents affection stronger upon Charles.

Unhappy youth! but who durst arraign the decrees of Providence, or say, it would have been better that thou too hadst fallen a martyr to the fever that swept away thy brother and sister?

Passing over the earliest, the happiest stages of human life, in which both his parents joined in the educating of their darling, but in which the most remarkable incident was, his forming an infantile friendship for Maria. Let us begin our narrative at the fourteenth year of Charles's existence. Maria was one year younger. A friendship,

it

it has been said, had been formed between these parties. Charles would frequently run beyond his limits into the grounds of Mr. Asper, in order to convey a play-thing, and afterwards a book, to Maria; and the person who had the care of her, who had formerly served Mrs. Edwin, would sometimes permit her charge to return the visit at the cottage.

It was on an occasion of this sort that Charles, happy to receive his lovely friend, led her over the small demesnes of his father, pointed out to her the grove and the root-house in which he received his instruction, the field where he met his male companions, the scene of his sports: the part of the stream in which he delighted to angle; and more than all, the blooming progeny of Flora, which his father, mother, and himself, had assisted in the cultivation of. From these he selected his greatest favourites, and composing a beautiful bouquet, presented it to Maria, and begged she would wear it for his sake. "That I will, my dear Charles," she replied. "I only wish that the beauty of these flowers was more permanent."

ment. I have every toy, every book, that you have given me; you shall one day see my little arrangement of them, and then you will judge what a value I set upon every thing that has been yours."

"That is the case with me," said Charles; "all your gifts are deposited in la cabinet where my father allows me to lock up my books."

As, with their arms around each other, Charles and Maria discoursed in this manner, they wandered down the winding walk to the bank of the river. The nosegay did not set right; the latter stopped to adjust it; the youth in the mean time took some flowers from his bosom, and placed them between the ribband of her chip hat. Whilst they were thus engaged, a voice, which sounded to her ears as loud as thunder, exclaimed, "Maria!" She turned, and beheld her father.

Mr. Edwin was with him.

The confusion of the young couple could not have been greater had they been detected in the commission of the greatest crime. They blushed, stammered, and seemed agitated

tated to a degree, that so far from permitting them to frame an excuse, would not suffer them to speak even the truth.

All that the stern father could learn from the sobbing Maria, or the trembling Charles, was, that her attendant had brought the young lady to visit the mother of the latter. Furious with rage at this intelligence, he rudely snatched her from her companion, and vowing vengeance against the domestic, hurried her to the mansion.

Mr. Edwin, who had not during this scene spoken a word, followed.

The consequences that ensued from this little adventure were, as may easily be imagined, the discharge of the servant, and the stricter confinement of Maria. All means of communication between the young people were now entirely cut off, nor had they any opportunity of seeing each other, except at church, where, it will perhaps be needless to state, Charles became a constant attendant.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

IN the manner which we have mentioned, at the close of our last chapter, a period of near four years elapsed, only remarkable for the personal and mental improvement of Charles and Maria.

Such of our readers as have contemplated the statue of Antinous, it will be easy to possess with an idea of the soft, yet manly beauty of the youth; but to those that have not been so happy, we fear our words will convey a very faint picture of his most elegant and finished form; a form on which nature had bestowed those graces, which, it is to be lamented, that modern art would be foiled in attempting to reach.

In height just above the middle size; in construction strong, without the least inclination to clumsiness; in every action easy and elegant, was Charles Edwin. His fine brown hair hung in ringlets upon his shoulders, or straying over his cheeks and forehead, shaded a countenance flushed with the glow of health, and beaming with benignity.

Such was our hero: Maria, whose form, which we have before remarked, had more than promised to be equally graceful, had now attained to the summit of that perfection, and with elegance had acquired a dignity of manner that would, in a country less redundant in female beauty, have given the beholders an idea of a superior being.

The outline of her face was oval, her nose straight, her eyes blue, and her under lip pouting. But although these were perfections which the ancients required in the Grecian countenance, they also required more to constitute beauty: they required that smiling playfulness of features, that dazzling brilliancy of complexion for which Maria was distinguished. When the reader has drawn this mental picture of our heroine, he must adorn it with a profusion of auburn hair, which curled upon her forehead and temples, and wandered over her bosom in ringlets, whose heights seemed touched with gold; and, if he be an antiquarian, as we have compared the youth to Antinous, the best idea we can give him of the lady, will be to say, that the

contour

contour of her face bore an exact resemblance to that of the Psyche, which we have before seen.

In the stolen glances which had passed between these lovers, for so in fact they were from infancy, at their casual meetings, until Maria had obtained the age of seventeen, Charles had remarked a hilarity in her countenance, which led him to imagine that the rumours he had heard of her father's harshness were false, and that she was not really unhappy; but soon after that period, the smiles receded from her lovely face, and gave place to those symptoms of sorrow, which sat upon her brow and clouded her features. She seemed abstracted, lost in thought, and her eyes were frequently suffused with tears, which communicated the keenest sensations of anguish to the heart of Charles. As he had no means of intercourse with the family, he was upon the rack to know what could have happened to cause the alteration and emotion he had observed in Maria.

He enquired amongst her acquaintance for some time without effect; at length he was informed that she was to be married to his uncle,

uncle, Mr. Edwin. Alas! the certainty was more dreadful than the suspense had been.

The whole mystery was now unravelled. He found that he loved her to distraction; but he found it at a time when she was upon the point of being given to another; at a time too when the nautical profession in which he had engaged obliged him to be absent, and to attend the calls of honour and duty.

What could he do? He would have given the world to have spoken to her, though but for a minute. During the short period he had to stay, he watched several nights in the garden, on that side of the mansion in which her chamber was situated; but although a light was visible in the room, and he saw, or thought he saw, the shadow of his Maria, he could not, by any signal that he durst make, induce her to come to the window. Obligated at last to depart, he set off with his father for London, whence he was to proceed to a situation in which he hoped the activity of his life would blunt his sensations, and that he should disperse his cares upon the friendly bosom of the ocean.

Whether

Whether his marine excursion produced that good effect, will, in due time, appear; at present we must attend for a few moments to Maria, whose face was a faithful index to her mind, and indicated a heart torn with the various sensations of love and grief.

It has been so frequently remarked, that it is almost nugatory to remark it once more, that "great events are often produced from small causes." Trite as the above observation may seem, it is nevertheless true; and the subsequent pages will shew, that the effect operated to a considerable extent in determining the fate of Maria and Charles, although the cause arose from the following slight circumstance.

A few pages back, we presented to the reader a rural scene, in which we drew the pictures of our hero and heroine at the early ages of thirteen and fourteen, wandering down the winding walk which led from the cottage to the bank of the river. We grouped the two lovely children; and in the moment when Charles, in playful dalliance, was adjusting the nosegay, or head-dress, of his

his juvenile flame, we brought her father and Mr. Edwin to the spot.

This was, perhaps, a fatal moment for all the parties. The lovely Maria, whose face and neck were suffused with blushes, became in the eyes of the latter an interesting object; and though he could not absolutely be said to adore her juvenile graces, it is certain they inflamed his breast with a strong desire to mark their progress. He did so. He became a constant visitor at the house of Mr. Asper. He became every day more sensible of the charms of his daughter as they approached toward maturity. He watched her every look, word, and action, with the most sedulous and jealous attention; and as he frequently saw the glances that passed between her and Charles, and had still more frequent occasion to observe the emotion which the bare mention of his name excited in her bosom, he was resolved to rid himself of a youth, who, from his personal and mental attractions, he had reason to think would become a dangerous rival. To do this with the appearance of consulting the future welfare of his nephew, required some art, but
was

was not a task to which his talents were by any means unequal. A minute served him to form his scheme, and an hour to put it in practice.

In pursuance of this design, he took the opportunity of his brother's absence to call at the cottage. If Mrs. Edwin was astonished when the name of Mr. Edwin was announced to her, and foreboded that he came with some complaint against her beloved husband, or equally beloved Charles, she was much more so when she saw him approach with the utmost mildness and benignity of countenance. He saluted her, took her trembling hand, and leading her to the sofa, thus began:

"It is not, my dear sister, a very uncommon, though it may be truly said to be an unfortunate circumstance, for a coolness, which perhaps has arisen from slight causes, to subsist for a long series of years between the nearest relatives. Long after either party, yielding to the dictates of reason, are certain that they have been deceived, that pride which is inherent to our system prevents them from making those concessions, and performing the hardest task, but at the same time

time the noblest effort of the human mind; that of owning itself in the wrong. I am convinced that I have been so, that talk I have undertaken, I love my brother, and I here confess I have used him with harshness."

"Say not so!" replied Mrs. Edwin much moved: "perhaps the fault, if there has been any, has been mutual. He, as the younger, should have made concessions to you, and have sought your favour! It is impossible for one man to have a sincerer esteem for another, than he has for you! How will his heart rejoice in this reconciliation! therefore I conjure you to tell me from what motives it has arisen?"

"From remorse on the one hand," said Mr. Edwin. "I have often reflected with contrition upon the unmerited coolness with which I repressed Henry's efforts towards a renewal of our former friendship; and on the other, from an affection which has been for some time growing in my bosom towards my nephew Charles."

"Heaven!" said Mrs. Edwin, "has inspired it! My dear boy will be the har-

binger

binger and band of peace betwixt his heretofore disunited family!"

"He will indeed," replied Mr. Edwin: "I have been long a spectator of his blooming graces; I have long been an attentive hearer of the praises bestowed upon his genius, his talents and accomplishments, which are the theme of every neighbor's tongue. The time is now nearly arrived when he should launch those talents which have hitherto bloomed only in the shade, into the broad sunshine, and upon the expansive ocean of life. I will myself take upon me the care of his future establishment."

Words are too weak to convey any adequate idea of the pleasure that glowed in the grateful bosom of the mother at this intimation. She seized the hand of the speaker, and bursting into tears, as she bent her head upon it, "Give me leave thus," she said, "to find vent for the strong sensations of gratitude which oppress my heart. Will you indeed be a second father to my darling Charles, and place him in a situation, which the straitness of his own father's circumstances

stances would preclude him from arriving at, by any other means?"

"I will! I will! my lovely sister!" said he, embracing her: "Let me know what profession he has a predilection for, and leave his establishment in it to one, whose love for him is second only to yours!"

"How can I, after this generous offer," replied Mrs. Edwin, "assail your ears with any words that may appear like those of repining or complaint? Yet I know the tenderness of your disposition will anticipate my feelings, when I inform you that the strongest bias of my Charles's mind seems to be toward the naval service of his country."

The eyes of Mr. Edwin sparkled with pleasure at this intimation, when he exclaimed, "Happy predilection! his great grandfather, who purchased the estate which I now enjoy, was, you know, an admiral. I shall live to see our dear Charles arrive at the same dignity!"

"Dignity and honour, my dear sir," said Mrs. Edwin, trembling violently, "however desirable, lose some part of their value in a mother's estimation, when she considers the

perils through which an only child must pursue them. Would to heaven the dear boy would incline to some profession equally honourable, but less environed with danger."

"In this case," returned Mr. Edwin, "the inclination of a youth should always be consulted, and I must confess that I am pleased and proud that the wishes of Charles point to a profession, which, had it been left to me, would have been the one I should have chosen for him. I have the happiest presentiment in his favour, and prophecy, that as the features are, so the fame and fortune of his grandfire will be revived in him!"

Whilst Mr. Edwin was thus soothing the anxiety which reigned in the bosom of the fond mother, and seemingly participating the pleasure which it gave her to hear that her Charles had found in his uncle so opulent a protector, that youth entered. Language is too cold to express his feelings, when he was informed what had been the subject of their conversation. Glowing with the most enthusiastic ardour to distinguish himself, the vivid prospects which adorn the morning of life

life appeared to him doubly brilliant. That pleasing anticipation of happiness, so prevalent in youthful bosoms, acquired additional strength when he was complimented upon the profession he had chosen, and promised by Mr. Edwin every assistance in it that his interest or purse could bestow. He already saw himself advanced, he saw himself in the possession of fame, fortune, and what he valued above all, of the lovely Maria.

Neither his countenance, nor his heart, were formed to become the receptacles of coldness or deceit. He threw himself on his knees to thank his uncle and his mother; and whilst he poured out his soul before them, betrayed his passion.

"I have," said he, "from infancy, loved the angelic daughter of Mr. Asper; heaven seems to smile upon my passion, and has, through your means, my honoured uncle! pointed out a pursuit by which I may, in time, render myself worthy of her."

"I am pleased, my dear Charles!" replied Mr. Edwin, "that you refer the passion which you fancy you have formed for Miss Asper to time. You are too young

even to think, much less to determine upon, a step which will fix your happiness or misery for life. Hitherto secluded from the world, it is impossible you can say with truth that she is the most lovely and amiable of her sex, because you have had no opportunity to compare her with others.

“When a youth of eighteen vows eternal constancy, my dear sister,” said he, taking the hand of Mrs. Edwin with a smile, “may we not suspect that there is more of passion than of prudence, in his composition?”

“Generally speaking we may,” she replied, “but with respect to Charles, I would pledge myself for his sincerity. Accustomed, in early life, almost daily, to see the lovely Maria, I do not wonder that his heart is sensible of hers, which, you must grant, are no common attractions; but although I admire her nearly as much as himself, I am glad his professional duties will oblige him to be absent a few years. Let him render himself worthy of her, and heaven only knows with what rapture I shall strain such a daughter to my bosom!”

Whether

Whether Mr. Edwin acquiesced in the opinion of his sister, it is impossible to say, as he made no reply, but turned the conversation to his brother, whom he appointed, with Charles, to attend him the next morning. They did so, and matters were settled, apparently, to the satisfaction of all parties. The young gentleman was, in a few days, to set out for London, where he was recommended to the care of a Captain who had been long acquainted with Mr. Edwin, who was to smooth his entrance into the navy, and with whom he was to proceed to Portsmouth, where the ship lay in expectation of sailing orders. It was in the few days just mentioned that Charles heard the rumour that his uncle was paying his addresses to Maria. At first, when he considered the difference of their ages, he was disposed to treat it as a joke; but it was reported from so many quarters, that at length it acquired consequence enough to make him uneasy.

This uneasiness he sought to alleviate by endeavouring to obtain an interview with the object of his adoration. But as that was

impracticable, after taking leave of his mother with a tenderness which we must pass over, as we deem it impossible to do justice to the scene, he, as has been stated, accompanied his father to London.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE rumours which had assailed the ears of Charles, were no less fatal to his repose than those respecting him, which had in the form of news been conveyed to Maria. She had learned from some reports, which, even in her secluded situation, had, through the medium of the servants, reached her, that his uncle had not only forgiven his brother, and reconciled himself to the family, but that, finding his nephew's inclination strongly pointed to the naval profession, he had furnished him with a proper recommendation, and the means to establish himself in it.

These rumours were soon confirmed by Mr. Edwin, who informed her of the measures he had taken for his nephew's advancement,

ment, and the fair prospect that lay before him.

"Heaven prosper him in all his undertakings!" said Maria, bursting into tears; "his departure must have affected his mother, who is all tenderness: how did Charles support her, or himself, at the moment of taking leave, perhaps for ever?"

"Charles," replied Mr. Edwin, "is too much of a hero to suffer a few female tears to repress his courage, and my sister has too much good sense to repine at a separation which she knows is likely to be of such advantage to her son. She parted with him tenderly, but firmly; and as for the youth, I never saw him in better spirits."

"Indeed!" said Maria.

"Indeed!" he continued: "Where the brook which bounds your father's estate crosses the road, by the small house which we call the cottage of the wood, the whole parish was assembled, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; I thought they would have devoured the poor lad; he had enough to do to return thanks to the male, and salute the female part of the assembly; and I believe

he was sincerely glad when he escaped from them, though, I must observe, they sent their prayers and blessings after him, even when he had been too long departed either to hear, or to be overtaken by them."

"They will," said Maria, "be registered in Heaven! The prayers of our worthy neighbours will ascend to the Throne of Mercy, and supplicate the Almighty to protect a youth, whose virtues and talents render him worthy of it. Oh! my dear Charles!" she continued, kneeling, "the beloved companion of my childhood! the first, the dearest, the only attachment of my youthful heart, would thou could'st hear thy Maria, here in the presence of thy uncle, vow eternal"***

Mr. Edwin stepped forward and endeavoured to raise her, saying, "Let me interrupt you. To vow, even in the presence of a lover, is rash, but, in his absence, ten times more absurd."

"I think not so!" she exclaimed, struggling, "therefore" ***. At this instant the door opened, and Mr. Asper entered.

It is hard to say which of the parties seemed the most surprised; poor Maria covered

covered her face with her hands and rushed out of the room.

An explanation soon after took place between Mr. Edwin and her father, in which the former gentleman informed the latter the steps he had taken to insure his success with the young lady. They congratulated each other upon the removal of Charles, and, before they separated, agreed, that not only vigorous but coercive measures should be used, in order to force her to the altar.

In the solitude of her own chamber, the lovely Maria sought consolation from reflection, but, alas! it afforded her very little. When she turned her retrospective eye upon the earliest stages of her life, though some hours of sunshine appeared, when accompanied by Charles she used to wander through the fields and gardens, yet the sports even of that gay period were clouded by the harshness of her father, a harshness which no attention, duty or blandishments, as she advanced in years, could subdue.

Totally secluded from her male friend, and from the society of her own sex in a great degree, she had passed the latter part

of her time in attending to the documents of a preceptress, who seemed to be nearly as harsh as her father.

While her thoughts were in this train they revolved upon the present hour, an hour the most unhappy that even in her unfortunate life she had ever yet experienced.

Charles had left the dear place of his nativity, perhaps never to return to it: He had not only departed, but departed without being sensible of the interest she had in his welfare: she seemed left alone in the world; her soul had flown after him, till recalled by a reflection which sharpened the pangs of her misery. This was no other than that she was condemned to listen to the odious addresses of his uncle. Addresses which she could neither avoid nor evade. "Shall I," said she, "be dragged to the altar, and, while my bosom glows with the image of that lovely youth, be forced, by parental authority, to take a vow which must render him and myself miserable for ever. But how can I tell that such a vow would render him miserable?" she continued, raising her

her voice, "Has he ever had an opportunity to inform me that he loves?"

"For Heaven sake Madam," said her servant, who now entered the room, "Do not speak so loud, I have heard every word you have said, as I was at work in the adjoining chamber, and if my master should be wandering about the house—"

"I thank you, Susan, for your caution," replied Maria, "but if my father had heard as much as yourself, he could not have confined me any closer."

"Indeed, Madam, he could not. Ah! I wish you had been where I have been to day."

"Where was that, Susan?"

"In the arms of that dear handsome creature, Mr. Charles Edwin!"

"Impossible!" said Maria, trembling violently.

"Upon my life, Madam, it is true! I'll tell you how it was."

"I do not wish," said Maria, with great gravity, "to hear of your amours. If you were acquainted with Charles, and he chose to take a tender leave of you, far be it from me to pry into such secrets."

"I acquainted with young Mr. Edwin! blefs me! How can you fuppose fuch a fine gentleman would condefcend to keep company with fuch a girl as me! or if he would, that I would have admitted of it? Born in a diftant village, though I have frequently feen him ride through, I never fpoke to him in my life till this day."

"How came you then to converse fo familiarly with him at firft?"

"Have a moment's patience, dear Mifs, and I'll tell you all! You know I go down the town every Thursday morning to fpeak to different people as they come to market; fo, juft as I had croffed the park ftile, who fhould I meet but Betfy Evans, and three of her companions, dizen'd out as fine as hands could make them. "Heyday!" faid I, "I fancy there's a wedding going forward!" "Indeed there is not," faid Betfy, "We do not affemble on fuch a joyful occafion." "What then," faid I. "Why," fhe replied, "all the young women of the village are going to wait at the cottage of the wood, in order to take leave of Mr. Charles Edwin, who is going to fight the

the French, will you make one amongst us?"

"Well," said Maria, with great impatience, "did you go?"

"I did Miss! Lord bless me, all the world was there, gentle and simple; there was our Reverend and his three daughters, there was the Tudors, the Floyds, the Evanfes, Farmer Price of the hill and all his family, there was also—"** "Never mind who was there," said Maria, "only inform me what passed at the meeting?"

"Why, Madam, as soon as Mr. Charles Edwin came, they all gathered about him, and he spoke to every one with so much good nature that they were ready to adore him. When he had done with the bettermost sort, he came to us maidens, and when my companions wished him health and happiness, he saluted them all round, at last it came to my turn."

"So!" said Maria, with a sigh.

"So, Madam, he looked at me, and, turning to Betsey Evans, he said, "who is this pretty lass?" "She is the only one of my neighbours that I have not the pleasure

pleasure of knowing." So Betsy told him that I waited upon you.

"Bless me! I never saw any thing alter as his face did in a minute; he turned first as pale as death, and then as red as scarlet, and then, taking my hand, he led me a few paces into the wood, where, as soon as he could speak, for trembling, he said, "Do you indeed belong to my lovely Maria?"

"I have lived with Miss Asper three weeks," I replied.

"How much am I obliged to fortune," he continued, "for giving me this opportunity to inquire after her health; inform your angelic Mistress, that I bid her affectionately farewell; and assure her, that the attachment I formed, almost in infancy, years have confirmed, and that my whole soul is hers!"

"Did Charles say this?" replied Maria, in the greatest emotion, "and did no one overhear him?"

Not a creature! He said what I have repeated, and more.

"More! inform me what?"

"Why, Madam," he said, "that he would have given the world for a quarter of an hour's

hour's conversation with you; that he had watched several nights in the garden, in the hope to have seen you at your chamber window, and that he would have written, but had no means to convey a letter; therefore, he bade me inform you of his unalterable affection; an affection which no occupation, country or climate, should change; and, after he had invoked Heaven to shelter and protect you during his absence, he produced this locket, which you see has his cypher upon his own hair.—Give this to Maria," he continued, "Would to Heaven that I had some small token of remembrance to keep for her sake: but as that is impossible to be obtained, I must recur to her image which is depicted upon my heart." Here the trampling of horses informed us that his father and uncle had arrived, so, taking a hasty leave, he departed; whilst I returned through the wood to avoid being seen, as my eyes were swollen with crying."

"Dear, tender hearted Susan," said Maria, "how much am I obliged to you! this precious pledge of my Charles's affection shall be my constant companion: I will place it next my heart, and when I look at it I shall,

shall, I hope, derive consolation in the hours of misery, which I foresee fate has in store for me, and resolution to resist the odious addresses of Mr. Edwin."

"I hope you will, Madam, for I am sure the whole neighbourhood cries shame upon him for endeavouring to supplant his nephew. Married indeed! and to such a beautiful young lady! His character is pretty well known here, but in my village, he has ruined so many young women that the country is almost up in arms against him.—I could tell you such stories of him—."

"As nothing," said Maria, "could render him more detestable in my eyes, I beg, for the sake of the objects of his cruelty, that you would suppress them. Let me thank you once more for your kind offices, and enjoin the most profound secrecy with respect to Charles, which, my dear Susan, you may depend upon it shall not go unrewarded."

Here Susan promised the most perfect acquiescence, and left her mistress to the contemplation of the locket, and to the enjoyment of those ideas which the preceding dialogue had raised.

CHAPTER.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE locket, which we placed in the hands of Maria, and from which she derived some small share of happiness, came to her at a time when happiness, by any other means, was not to be found in Penstock mansion. Sorry as we are to record the misfortunes of the loveliest of nature's children, as we have undertaken the task, truth obliges us to proceed, and fill up the outline of the tragic sketch which memory hath traced upon our minds.

A very few days had elapsed, after the departure of Charles, ere Mr. Edwin, sanctioned by her father, became more pressing in his suit, which he urged with little respect or delicacy toward the object of, what he called, his violent passion: As he was an almost constant resident in the house, and seemed insensible of the coldness with which he was treated, and as the afore said object of his persecution had no means of avoiding him, it will easily be conceived how harassing to her mind his addresses must have been, even when they were conducted with good manners;

manners; but he soon laid aside those, which he considered as an unnecessary appendage of gallantry, to a woman he was quite sure of, and began to treat her with rudeness, and even to take liberties, which neither the virtue nor the spirit of our heroine would tamely suffer her to endure.

Dreadful as the task was, she resolved to appeal to her father, and had scarcely taken this resolution before she found it necessary to carry it into effect; for passing from the parlour to the stairs Mr. Edwin, who had just entered at the hall door, rudely caught her in his arms, and forced her back again, saying, "Whither so fast, my fair fugitive; I wish to have some conversation with you."

"If you do," said Maria, "you must not only unhand me at present, but promise to treat me with more respect in future."

"Respect," said Mr. Edwin, "what an odious old fashioned word, are we not almost man and wife?"

"No, thank Heaven!" replied Maria, "we are not, nor, I hope, ever shall be!"

"What you hope, or fear," he continued, "is of little importance to me. I have the
consent

consent of Mr. Asper, and if you consider my situation in life, with all its concomitant circumstances, to say nothing of my ardent passion for you, my offer is such a one as no young lady in her senses, or who had not formed some *improper connection*, would refuse."

"It would," said Maria, "be affecting a simplicity, which I do not wish you to suspect is any part of my character, were I to pretend ignorance of what you mean by the term *improper connection*. My heart never produced a thought but what I dare avow, or formed a connection but one, and that I glory in. Accustomed from the earliest period of reason to consider Charles Edwin as the man who was born to make me happy; though I have had latterly no opportunity of seeing, I hold myself to be mentally affianced to him; I am proud of my choice, nor can you, sir, surely be angry, that the merit, which has had the power to repress your resentment against your brother, should have its weight with me, or call that connection improper which will form an alliance between the families of the Aspers and Edwins, by the

only

only means by which they ought to be united."

There was in this speech something that displeased Mr. Edwin. He traversed the room three or four times with rapid strides, and seemed agitated with the most violent emotion. Maria, who thought this a good opportunity to escape, had advanced to the door, when he seized her hand, saying, "Child! for so, notwithstanding your boasted sagacity, you are, do you suppose it to be in the power of such an idiot, as Charles, to do away that resentment which has been, for a long series of years, accumulating in a bosom like mine. You value yourself upon your candour, and have confessed your passion for that indigent young man, in terms that do no great honour either to your modesty, or your prudence. I will be equally sincere, and inform you, that the reconciliation which appears to have taken place between me and my brother is fallacious: that the service I have done my nephew was but a pretence to send him away, and at the same time to entangle his father in a net, from which he will find it difficult to escape. Know, that I have bonds from the weak and short-sighted Captain Edwin,

Edwin, for every shilling I have advanced in aid of the Quixotism of his son. Bonds which I have procured without the knowledge or concurrence of his wife! Bonds which it will depend upon you to cancel, or to enforce the immediate execution of!"

"Oh Heavens!" said Maria, "is there in all the annals of wickedness such another stretch of wanton malignity?"

"Many!" returned Mr. Edwin, with sternness, "a resentment which has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, must be satiated!"

"Fiends might," said Maria, "harbour such a passion, but in a human bosom how could it arise?"

"From the superior affection which my parents bore to Henry. Had not my father died sudden and intestate, the larger part of his possessions would have devolved to my younger brother; but that was not all, he once joined my mortal enemy, and forced me to an humiliation which has ever since rankled in my heart."

"Though unacquainted with the circumstance," said Maria, "I have no doubt but his conduct was such as would, if I knew it, heighten

heighten my esteem for the character of the Captain, as I believe his benevolence was ever exerted in the cause of innocence and virtue."

"Be it so!" replied Mr. Edwin, "I have no objection to your esteem for *him*, as it may induce you to take a measure that may save him from destruction."

"What measure?"

"By instantly consenting to our union; you confirm the power you have already acquired over me; I will ratify the treaty of friendship I have apparently concluded with my Brother, give his bonds into your hands, and through my future life promote the interest of your favorite Charles."

"How short sighted," said Maria, "Are the wicked! How thin the web which they think impenetrable! Child, though you just now called me, do you suppose I have not sagacity enough to discover that if I were, which heaven forbid! to become that miserable wretch, your wife, a man so hardened in dissimulation, as you have confessed yourself to be, might in an instant revoke your promise, and laugh at the idiot whom you
had

had deceived; and who had neither the opportunity to seek redress, nor even the power to complain."

"Have a care!" said Mr. Edwin, biting his lips, and trembling with passion.

"I have no care for myself," returned Maria, "I know my life is doomed to misery, but it shall not be of my own seeking; therefore I am determined, were Charles out of the question, to form no alliance with a character so vicious as yours appears to be. You, sir, have no power over me at present; nor shall all the force of a cruel father drag me to the altar, or make me give my hand to an object I hold so detestable as yourself!" Maria, during this speech, had drawn toward the door, and at the close of it disappeared so suddenly that Mr. Edwin had no power to hinder her departure.

Burning with resentment, he instantly flew to Mr. Asper, and laid his complaint before him in such terms as spoke the irritation of his mind. The father of Maria, who, though for the reason already stated, he hated the younger branch of the house of Edwin, possessed in comparison to the gentleman

tleman that now addressed him, a considerable share of coolness, ventured to arraign his conduct with respect to the confession he had made to Maria, which, he truly said, was to the greatest degree, imprudent. However, as it was impossible to recal those words that had passed, he promised him in his next interview with her, to do away the effect of them, and insist upon her compliance with the engagement he had made for her.

With this assurance Mr. Edwin departed, and as the old gentleman thought that delays of any business, but particularly of that in which a woman was concerned, were dangerous, he rung for Susan to desire her lady to attend.

Susan entered the picture of despair, her hair dishevelled, and eyes full of tears, and informed him, that Miss Asper had fainted, and was at that moment extremely ill.

Tenderness had no great share in the composition of Mr. Asper. However, he ordered her some medical assistance, and seemed impatient for her recovery, though it was, perhaps, rightly conjectured by the servants, that his impatience arose from his concern
for

for his friend, rather than his daughter. Whatever desire Maria might have to procrastinate or to evade an altercation with her parent, as she was above dissimulation, the hour that her constitution triumphed over the disorder, which the emotions of her mind had occasioned, she announced it to him, and the next morning she saw him enter her chamber.

All the sternness for which the countenance of Mr. Asper was so remarkable, had vanished from his features. He approached her, and enquired after her health with some gentleness, and, placing himself beside her, took her hand. As this was a mode of treatment the young lady had been but little used to, it affected her spirits, and she burst into tears.

"Why weeps my dear girl?" said the father: "Is it from any apprehension that my presence forebodes the renewal of a proposal, which I understand, from my friend, Mr. Edwin, was either from the suit itself, or his manner of conducting it, disagreeable to her?"

"Oh! my dear, dear father!" she replied, throwing herself upon her knees to

him, "Behold these tears, this countenance pale with sickness, and this frame weakened with the agitation I have undergone! Behold your poor Maria almost sinking into that earth; in which her mother has long since been deposited: And if my present situation affects you, let me seize these moments of tenderness, to conjure you, never to mention to me the name of a man, as unworthy to be your friend, as he is to be the husband of your daughter!"

"It is impossible," said Mr. Asper, as he raised her up, "for me to say what ideas you may have formed of the man, who is worthy to be your husband; but with respect to my judgment in the choice of a friend, you must, my dear, allow me to be guided by my own opinion. The gentleman in question is not an acquaintance of yesterday. I knew him long before I was married to your mother; and though perhaps our having been *school-fellows* may not render him more amiable in the eyes of a *modest* young lady, it certainly makes him more valuable in those of an obstinate old father. I did not wish to propose a match of passion, but of prudence,

to you, because I have had experience enough in the world to know that the chances are ten to one in favor of the happiness of the latter, against the former."

"That may be, my dear sir, though I must confess I almost think it impossible, even where the moral character of both the parties to whom you allude is equal," but surely where there is such a depravity of mind as I have remarked in Mr. Edwin—"

"Young ladies," returned Mr. Asper, "are quick sighted with respect to the foibles of lovers, who have attained the middle age. Mr. Edwin, though possessed in an eminent degree of that quickness of temper, and openness of disposition, which is the characteristic of our countrymen, is a man of learning and sense; he is a man who has arrived at a period when the turbulent passions of youth, which seek only their own gratification, have in some degree subsided: a circumstance that will induce him to consider himself obliged to a young woman of prudence and virtue, who will condescend to become the tender friend and companion of his future years; he is, moreover, a man of unbounded opulence."

"He is," replied Maria, "but, at the same time, you must recollect that his parsimony is still more conspicuous: but, alas! sir, neither from that, nor his age, arises my objection to him. It is not his person, nor his foibles, but his vices that render him detestable to me."

"Detestable is a strong word:" said Mr. Asper, "The vices of a middle aged gentleman are hideous things in the eyes of a young lady when opposed to the virtues of Charles: pardon me, I shall perhaps offend your *delicacy*, in lightly pronouncing the name of that *immaculate* youth. He certainly is the reverse of his uncle, not only in your opinion, but in reality. The one a man of sense and property, the other the child of folly, and a beggar."

"May he ever remain so!" replied Maria, "rather than pervert his sense to the ruin of our sex, and spread his property as snares for the entanglement of his own."

"How!" exclaimed Mr. Asper in the utmost fury, "Do you, a girl, an infant, dare to set up your idol in defiance of me, and immodestly trumpet forth the praises of a reptile, whom I am bound to execrate!"

"I came

"I came to endeavour, by tenderness and blandishments, to bring you back to your duty; but as I find they have no effect upon the stubbornness of your disposition, I am resolved to try what coercive measures will do; therefore prepare to receive Mr. Edwin as the man whom I have fixed on to be your husband; and as I mean to shorten the period of your misery, at least before marriage, I intend that the ceremony shall take place in three days, without you sue to me, as an act of grace, to defer it till the beginning of the next week."

"That!" said Maria, rising with great dignity, "a spirit which I derive from you forbids me to do. I shall never sue to defer a ceremony which cannot take place without my consent: and here I vow, and may the angels that preside over virtuous passions hear and record it! that were Mr. Edwin as amiable as he is detestable to me, no tortures should wring from me a consent which might give a pang to the bosom of my beloved Charles!"

As the lovely object of parental persecution bent her knee to make this solemn

adjuration, the locket, which Charles had sent her, hung from her bosom. Quick as thought she cast her eye upon it, and endeavoured to replace it, when her father, rudely snatching it from her, exclaimed, "What bauble is this? Ah! do not my eyes deceive me? the cypher of your paramour: so then, my virtuous young madam, you have, notwithstanding all my vigilance, had some communication with him! I now no longer wonder at your heroism. Inform me, I command you, when did you see him? Are you his mistress, or his wife?"

"Your question," said Maria, "unfeeling as it is, answers itself. You know I have not for many years spoken to him. Were I in his power, Charles has too much virtue and honour to make a mistress of me, and as to a wife, I fear so much happiness will never be my lot."

"Do you?" said Mr. Asper, "then why keep this bauble in remembrance of him? Thus! Thus!" he cried, stamping it under his foot, "may it be trampled on and perish, as I hope to see young Edwin."

At

At this instant Maria gave a shriek, and fell into convulsions, that alarmed the servants who rushed into the room. They all supposed that in his passion Mr. Asper had struck his daughter. The physician who was sent for pronounced her case desperate; and the fears of the father, who felt more for himself than any other human creature, induced him to order the greatest attention to be paid to her; we must therefore leave her, hovering on the brink of life, in order to return to our young adventurer.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

CHARLES accompanied his father to London, and with him waited upon Captain Wynn, to whom they had a letter of recommendation from Mr. Edwin; but who, the moment he saw him, the Captain recollected to have previously known, by being on duty as an Officer of Marines on board the ship of which the former was a Lieutenant.

There is perhaps no circumstance which affords more pleasure to men at advanced

periods of life, than the renewal of an acquaintance formed in juvenile years. This was so peculiarly the case with the two Officers before mentioned, that, during the stay of Captain Edwin in town, they were inseparable, and, when they parted, Captain Wynn promised to consider Charles, whom he had invited to reside with him, as his own son, and to be equally attentive to his morals and to his interest.

Though our hero had, in the metropolis, entered a new world, and daily, nay hourly, found objects to amuse, and indeed to surprise his inquisitive mind, it is not our intention to discriminate those things which attracted his attention, or inform our readers of the mode in which he passed his time, further than by stating, that he constantly attended Mrs. Wynn and the Captain to their parties and public amusements; and that his initiation, and the novelty of his remarks, seemed to afford them considerable entertainment.

At length the day appointed for their setting out for Portsmouth arrived, they proceeded to that port, and were conveyed on board the Burford, at Spithead, the ship of which Captain Wynn was the Commander.

The

The human heart can never long endure a vacuum! Charles had left his native village, and his companions: he had also left, at Penstock, something still more dear to him, his lovely Maria, and relatives, whose loss was but ill supplied by the few connections he had formed in town; yet even these he had been obliged to resign, and was now launched upon the bosom of the ocean, among a set of beings whose characters, manners, and mode of life were entirely new to him, without one single friend or acquaintance except the Captain. This was a reflection that struck him the day after he entered the ship; however, the effect of it was in a considerable degree obviated by the generous consideration of his patron, who, a few hours after, introduced him to all the Officers, whom he summoned upon the quarter deck for that purpose, as the son of a brave and worthy friend of his, whom he had taken under his protection, and whom he desired them to consider as his own.

There needed no more to smoothe the way of Charles, he became in an instant acquainted with the whole corps: from the elder he

received tenders of service and offers to instruct him in his duty; the younger saluted him as a brother and companion; he accepted their advances with that gratitude and politeness which was due to them, endeavoured to render himself agreeable to all, but only formed an intimate attachment with a Mr. Trevor, a young Midshipman, whose birth was adjoining to his own.

The ship was under sailing orders for Plymouth, from whence it was conjectured that she was to proceed on a short cruize. On one of the most enchanting mornings in May, with her sails bent, and streamers flying, she scudded lightly over the billows; every moment changing the scenes which the coast, as she approached to, or receded from it, the undulating waves, or the various tinted sky, presented.

It was a natural consequence of the intimacy which Charles Edwin had formed with Mr. Trevor, that he should unbosom himself to him; that he should take delight in describing the beauties of his native village; his parents, friends and connections. Gratitude and love were the two ruling passions of

of his bosom, therefore it is little to be wondered, that he was diffuse when he mentioned the obligation he was under to his uncle, and that he dwelt upon the praises of his dear Maria with peculiar satisfaction. "There was," said he, in conclusion, "a report in circulation, just before I left Penstock, but so extremely absurd and improbable, that nothing but that jealousy which is always the concomitant of an ardent passion, could excuse me, even to myself, for having given credit to it for a moment."

"What was it?" said Trevor.

"It was no other," he continued, "than that Mr. Edwin, my uncle, had made overtures, and was about to be married to Maria."

"Why do you deem such a circumstance, considering the character of Mr. Edwin, to be either absurd or improbable?"

"The character of Mr. Edwin! What do you mean?"

"I mean, my dear friend, to give you a hint, that I am not totally unacquainted, by report, with your family, whom indeed I may almost call the neighbours to my own."

I was born in a village on the northern coast of Devonshire; so that you see there is only the channel between the places of our nativity."

"But what," said Charles, "have you heard of my family, particularly of my uncle?"

"What I have heard of him, has, I will freely confess to you, been little to his credit: the sum of it is that he has had, from his youth, an unbounded, a licentious passion, for female beauty; and that, unguided or unawed by principle, he has used every means, and sought every opportunity for the gratification of it. You may well start, but you may depend upon it that I should not have made so serious a charge against him to any one, particularly to you, had I not had the most indisputable authority for my assertion."

"What authority?" said Charles, with the greatest emotion.

"The word of my father, and the sorrow and seclusion of an aunt, who is still living. The story, in which you will find that your parent had some concern, is briefly this. Emily Trevor, at the age of eighteen, was, even in Devonshire, reckoned extremely beautiful.

LAW I

She

She was possessed of talents, and, as no pains or expence had been spared on her education, you may suppose she was accomplished; but alas! she was also possessed of a sensibility of temper, and warmth of disposition, that were the instruments of her subsequent misfortunes.

You know it is no uncommon circumstance for the inhabitants of the opposite sides of the channel to keep up a friendly or commercial correspondence with each other. We have relations in Glamorganshire, and the Devonshire beauty, as Emily Trevor was then called, was on a visit near Swansea. At that town she first saw Mr. Edwin. It would be to little purpose to trace the progress of an amour, that had so melancholy a termination. It will be sufficient to state, that, captivated by her charms, burning to possess her, he made the most liberal matrimonial overtures. As the young lady had no objection to his person, and the match, in point of fortune, was really an advantageous one, she, with the advice of her relations, referred him to my father: the treaty was concluded as far as it could be by letter,

letter, Mr. Edwin was invited to our house, and the young people lived in that intimacy which is common with those who expect soon to be indissolubly united.

“The tardiness of the lawyers was by no means suitable to the apparent ardour of the lover. The settlements were delayed beyond the usual time; and Mr. Edwin frequently besought my father, on whom his sister entirely depended, to ride to Exeter, to urge the completion of them.

“This it appeared afterwards was a dreadful interval for poor Emily.

“At last the writings were finished, a day appointed for the ceremony, and Captain Edwin, who at that time was recruiting at Biddeford, and who had frequently been at our house, was invited.

“The morning came, the bride was dressed, your father, and the company, also came; in short, nothing was wanting but the bridegroom. He unfortunately did not appear: you may easily conceive the confusion his absence occasioned, especially when it was found, upon enquiry, that instead of retiring to his chamber the preceding evening, he

he had walked down to the village, and, hiring post horses, had ridden cross the country. At this information, the lovely Emily fainted in the arms of her brother, and, when brought to life, made a discovery which planted a dagger in the bosom of my father. This, as you will suspect, was no other than that, betrayed by her lover, her passion, or constitution, she had already granted Mr. Edwin all the privileges of a husband.

“As the person upon whom the vengeance of my father would have naturally fallen, was absent, he attacked Captain Edwin, whom he charged with being a party in the conspiracy to delude his innocent and unfortunate sister, and affront the family of the Trevors.

“The Captain, shocked at his brother's perfidy and cruelty, repelled the charge like a man of honour. He entered warmly into the resentment of my father; and, taking his hand, and that of the lady, vowed he would seek the fugitive, and either bring him back to perform the contract he had entered into, or deliver him up to the vengeance of the family, to which would be added his own.

“The

“The unfortunate are ready to catch at the slenderest thread by which comfort seems to be suspended. Peace, by these assurances of Captain Edwin, was in some degree restored to the bosom of my father; and the friend who had so generously made our cause his own, set out in search of his brother.

“He was absent about three weeks; but, to the great joy of my father, he returned with Mr. Edwin. An interview was effected; and I have no doubt but that the spirit of the Trevors, which the occasion had called forth, was exerted; for I understand your uncle made the most humiliating concessions, and promised to fulfil his engagements.

“An early day was appointed; on the morning of which the Captain and Mr. Edwin appeared at our house. As the former business had made some noise, it was determined that this should be rather private. My father and some relations only were present. The bride at length came into the room, and received, with great dignity, the salutations of the company: but, when Mr. Edwin advanced to take her hand, she, looking upon him with ineffable disdain, said,

“After

“After the public affront you have put upon a woman that you now, overawed by the superior spirit of my brother and your own, meanly solicit to become your wife. After taking advantage of my moments of tenderness, to triumph over my virtue; and, after breaking every vow you have made, every engagement you have entered into, what usage can I expect from you when you have an unlimited power over me. At present you have used me as a subterfuge for your cowardice, as your shield from the vengeance of an offended family. As such, I shall continue to shelter you from my relations, because I think their lives too valuable, to be opposed to that of such a miscreant, as yourself! Therefore you may depart in safety; and, though you leave me loaded with infamy, and abandoned to misfortune, you may believe me when I assert, that I derive some comfort, even in my present situation, when I reflect upon the escape which I have had; for experience, dearly bought, hath taught me to consider, that no infamy or misfortune, can be equal to those

and great evils to be avoided by woe

woes that might, nay would, have accrued from a nearer connexion with you!"

At this period an involuntary burst of applause issued from her relations, while the lovely Emily retired, and left Mr. Edwin subject not only to the contempt of the company, but of the neighbourhood, from which he was forced to make a precipitate retreat."

"What," said Charles, "became of the young lady?"

"She immediately," returned Trevor, "retired from the village, which had been the place of her nativity, to a small house, which had for many years belonged to the family, where, as I at first observed, she has past the greatest part of her life, in an almost total seclusion from that society she was so formed to adorn; but, I must add, that, although a retired, she has not been altogether an useless member of it. With a contracted income, but benevolent heart, she has banished poverty and idleness from the district; and, by paying attention to the female part of the peasantry, she hath diffused both literary and moral instruction, which

has influenced the conduct and fortune of many girls, who would otherwise have been brought up to indigence and ignorance."

"How valuable would such a woman have been to the world," said Charles, "had it been her lot to have fixed her affection upon a man of principle and honour! The first impressions which I received of my relations' character were not very prepossessing; but their force was blunted by the sense of subsequent obligations. They now recur to my bosom in all their pristine strength: I behold the conduct of my uncle in a light truly detestable; I believe the reports that I have heard, and tremble for the fate of Maria!"

Whilst those reflections which the story had excited, passed in the mind, and conveyed the most unpleasant sensations to the heart of Charles, the ship proceeded on her short voyage. The Captain, who had remarked the gloom that clouded the features of our hero, imagined, as he justly might, that it arose from a dislike to a nautical life. He was too well acquainted with the instability of youthful minds, with respect to their professional ideas, to be surprised at this, and too

too good a man to wish to force the son of his friend into a situation which might render him unhappy. He therefore sent for him into the cabin; and, after stating the observations he had made, and the suspicion that arose in consequence of them, he demanded an explicit answer to the question he should put to him; which was, "If he had taken a dislike to the occupation he had entered upon? as, in that case," he said, "he by no means meant to bind him down to his engagement, but would land him at Plymouth; and so far from considering his dislike to arise from volatility of disposition, and taking his conduct amiss, he would furnish him with money to pursue his journey to London, and strain his interest to the utmost, to fix him in a situation more agreeable to himself."

The heart of Charles Edwin was the seat of gratitude: Struck with the considerate and generous offer of the Captain, he burst into tears, saying, "It is some consolation to me, honoured sir, that, notwithstanding my misfortunes, I am an object in the smallest degree worthy your attention: But, believe me,

me, sir, the despondence which has given rise to your kind enquiry, does not accrue from any dislike to a profession to which several of my family have been attached, which I have freely chosen, and of which, had I experienced any hardships, which has not been the case, the pleasure and advantage of being under your command, would make a ten-fold amends for them!"

Captain Wynn pressed the hand of the young adventurer. "I am rejoiced," he replied, "that you are pleased with your situation, for two reasons; one is, that I should be loth to part with you; and the other, that I have a pleasing predilection that you will attain the highest honours of it: When I first went to sea (I was then a child), your great grandfather commanded the vessel, and was to me, what I am now to you; I consider myself as largely indebted to him, and shall endeavour to pay what I owe to his memory, in attention and services to you. On this subject we have said enough at present: but still I should wish to be informed what uneasiness haunts your mind, as perhaps it may be in my power to alleviate it. You will,"

will," he continued, "go ashore at Plymouth : Are you in want of money to purchase what you may deem necessities, or to spend in amusements?"

Charles assured him he was in every respect liberally provided.

"You regret being absent from your friends, and have, what we call, the *home sickness*?"

"When I took leave of my parents, and native village, I prepared my mind to endure a long absence from them."

"From parents and native village, I grant you," said the Captain, "a philosopher of eighteen might collect fortitude enough to endure a separation. I left Glamorganshire, and went to sea at a much earlier period of life than you ; therefore I did not feel what I suspect to be your sensations ; but I remember that when I again left my home, after having made three voyages, I thought more of a little girl, who is now Mrs. Wynn, than of all my other connexions."

The blushes of Charles betrayed him ; and the Captain continued, "I think, my young friend, I have guessed the cause of your sorrow."

"You

"You have indeed, sir," he replied, "I have left at Penstock what is dearer to me than life itself! and left her in a situation the most alarming that you can conceive—a situation from which, if she be living, it is impossible she can extricate herself; and what renders it doubly mortifying to me, this distress is brought upon her by the villainy of a near relation of my own."

"I have," said the Captain, "a great curiosity to be informed of the story, or, if you should deem that a matter of too much consequence to be communicated, at least of the name of the lady who is the cause of your present emotion."

"Your generosity to me demands that I should inform you of every circumstance, and first her name, which is Maria Asper."

"In that name," said the Captain, "you have given the contents of a tragic volume. It has been my misfortune to know her father. Her mother was a near relation of my wife."

"Then," said Charles, "your memory can furnish you with instances of his harshness,

ness, sufficient to spare me the trouble of painful recollection."

"It can, and does," replied the Captain; "but of the young lady I know very little: My wife, among other news which she received from Wales, heard, that she was upon the point of marriage with your uncle, Mr. Edwin."

"That report," said Charles, "is the cause of my present sorrow: as you will, when you hear the story, find that it is rendered probable by corroborating circumstances."—He then began his narrative, taking up the subject from his earliest infancy; but, although it was listened to with the greatest attention by the Captain, who was considerably interested in the affairs of our hero and his family, it would have afforded little pleasure to the reader, for this good reason, that it contained nothing more than is to be found in the preceding pages: We shall therefore pass over the rest of the dialogue, and conclude the chapter with the arrival of the Burford at Plymouth; from whence, after a stay of three weeks, she proceeded on her voyage, the object of which was to convoy a number of
of

of merchantmen into a certain latitude, and return with such of the homeward bound trade as she could pick up in the course of her passage.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

ALTHOUGH the ship was detained at Plymouth as long as we have stated, as the time was chiefly consumed in waiting for a favourable wind, neither Mr. Trevor nor Charles had an opportunity to make an excursion, which they much wished, across the country; the former to see his friends, and the latter in the hope, from the vicinity of the two coasts, to hear some news of Penstock, and his beloved Maria; about whom, the letters he had received from his parents were totally silent. However, obliged to acquiesce to a fate, the rigour of which was considerably softened by the kindness of Captain Wynn, and the friendship of Mr. Trevor, our hero had begun to recover his spirits, when a new event arose, in a situation,

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tion, in which we should have supposed events to have been scarce, to discompose him.

It has already been remarked, that he took great pleasure in contemplating the different scenes which the British coast had presented in his voyage to Plymouth, and although that coast had now receded from his sight, and the novelty of marine views had become familiar to him, there was something so awful in the vast expanse of sea, which the bosom of the Atlantic displayed, so grand in the variety which the ever changing clouds, the sun and moon beams playing upon the surface of the waves, exhibited, that his desire to peruse the great book of nature, thus lying open before him, frequently brought him upon deck. Whilst he stood there one day, a sailor, who was mending the netting, said to himself in Welsh, but loud enough to be over heard, "as sure as I live, that young gentleman is the son of Captain Edwin, and great grandson to the great Admiral Edwin, of Penstock."

Charles started, and, from an involuntary impulse, exclaimed, "I am! Do you know my family?"

"Do

"Do I?" said the sailor, throwing down his tools, "I remember your grandmother, your two maiden aunts that died, Evan Price, the old bailiff, your father, who is the best man in the world, and your uncle, whom every body says is one of the worst."

"Since you know my family so well," said Charles, "I must have some further conversation with you; how long have you been on board this ship?"

"But a few days," replied the sailor, "I came on board at Plymouth. When I came from the West Indies, I was discharged, and travelled from London to see my friends in Wales."

"Then perhaps you have lately been at Penstock?"

"It was," said the sailor, "the last port I touched at, before I spread all my canvass to meet the Burford, as I wished to make another trip with my old Commander, Captain Wynn."

"Tell me then," said Charles, "what you know of my family? My father and mother?"

"Your father and mother, heaven bless them, were in good health when I left the village."

"My uncle?"

"Your uncle," continued the sailor, taking out his tobacco box, "is well enough at present, though every one says, that if she dies, he will go nigh to be hanged."

"If who dies?" said Charles, trembling.

"Miss Maria, the heiress of Penstock mansion; ah, sir, you may well start, and endeavour to support yourself by the shrouds! it is a black business; for all Mr. Edwin is related to you, I wish he and old Asper were dangling at the yard-arm."

"I wish so too, with all my soul," returned Charles, "if they have injured my lovely Maria. Tell me therefore, I conjure you, what you have heard of her?"

"I heard of nothing else, while I was at the village, but her father's ill usage of her; he wanted her to marry your uncle, she refused; he attempted to force her from her chamber, in order to carry her to foreign parts, your uncle assisted, a struggle ensued, in the course of which Maria is said to have received

received a hurt which will put an end to her
sailing in this world; and if it does, I hope
her father, and your uncle, will make a trip
from *fize* to the gallows."

Charles did not hear the latter part of this
speech; and whilst the sailor was proceeding,
he endeavoured to support himself, but
would have fallen, if Trevor, who fortunately
arrived at that period, had not caught him
in his arms.

The sailor, unconscious of the mischief he
had done, attributed his disorder to some
sudden illness, and helped to convey him to
his birth.

It would not be very easy, were it ne-
cessary, to paint the agitation which the
news he had heard created in the bosom of
our hero. He scarcely, till that moment,
knew how much he loved, and how deeply
he was interested in the fate of the lovely
Maria; the ebullition of his mind, increased
the disorder of his body, and produced a
fever, during the paroxysms of which he
called upon her name, denounced vengeance
against his uncle, and run into such extrava-
gancies of speech and action, that both the

Captain and his friend trembled for his reason. Youth, and a strong constitution, at length triumphed over the disorder; a warmer atmosphere, and more benignant climate, contributed to restore him to health; and the opportunity, which their arrival at Madeira afforded him of being several weeks on shore, confirmed that change for the better, which had taken place in his system; but although his corporal health was restored, his mind had received a wound which it was beyond the reach of air or medicine to effect the cure of; especially as the letters he met at this Island, although they contained a variety of news, were as silent about Mr. Asper, his daughter, and even his uncle, as those which had preceded them.

“If we consider the aggregate situation of mankind, we shall not only admire the goodness, but the justice of Providence, as we shall find that not only good and evil, but happiness and misery are more equally distributed than, by the desponding, would be imagined, or by the sceptic be allowed.” This was the concluding sentence of a string of reflections upon the tyranny of the passions, and the
vanity

vanity and instability of human life, with which the Captain endeavoured to repress the anxiety of Charles, at one of his frequent visits to him at Funchal, where he was lodged in the house of a merchant: whether his soothing and reasoning had the desired effect is uncertain, but we are inclined to think he derived greater consolation from the friendship of Mr. Trevor, and the variety that the rich, glowing, and variegated scenery which the number of excursions that they made, to different parts of the Island, presented to their view; be this as it may, when the signal was given for the fleet to unmoor, he found himself well enough recovered to resume his station on board.

We shall slightly pass over a voyage in which no particular events happened, by only observing that it was continued to the latitude of the Canaries, where the Burford parted from those ships which she had convoyed out, and, with another man of war, which she met on her course, took the charge of those that were returning to England:

The homeward bound voyage was as propitious as the outward bound had been.

The fleet arrived off the Lizard without meeting any accident either from foes or storms; and the bosom of Charles experienced, in reviewing his native land, those sensations which an absence, especially the first, is sure to create. He cast his longing eyes upon the coast of Albion, whence his creative fancy wandered to that of Wales: the transition to Penstock was easy. He beheld, in idea, his native village; his family; and, what was dearer to him, his Maria. But how did he behold her? Pale, emaciated, dishevelled, a martyr to parental cruelty; nay, he pursued this melancholy train of thought still further, and "burst the cerements of the sepulchre," where he saw her clay-cold corse, beautiful even in death: there was no possibility of bearing long the emotion which such reflections excited; he sought the company of Trevor as a relief from his own sensations.

A transient gleam of good fortune seemed now to dart across the gloom which pervaded his bosom.

The fleet, which had arrived off the Land's-end, prepared to separate; and he soon

soon after understood from Captain Wynn, that he had orders to see those ships which were bound to Bristol, safe into Kingroad. Trevor and Charles congratulated each other upon this event, which, from the proximity of the coast to the places of their nativity, gave them the liveliest hopes of seeing their families and friends.

How frequently, as they sailed up the Bristol channel, did they strain their eyes toward the opposite coasts!—How eagerly did they dwell upon every object, as they approached to, or receded from it! Mr. Trevor pointed out to his friend that part of Devonshire in which the mansion of his father was situated; and Charles, as they passed, directing the eyes of his companion to the other side, by his lively description almost made him believe that he saw the white towers of Penstock rising above the craggy rocks and bold prominencies which distinguishes that part of the coast of Glamorganshire.

At length the ship came to an anchor; and a very few days had passed before Captain Wynn, sending for our hero to his
cabin,

cabin, informed him that he had a commission for him which he hoped would give him pleasure.

"I yesterday," he continued, "received a letter from Mrs. Wynn, with whom you are a great favourite. She was at Bath when the ship arrived, and has since travelled to Chepstow, in the hope of seeing me; but as it is impossible for me to leave my station at present, I have ordered Lieutenant Gordon to take the boat, and Mr. Trevor to attend him: you are to be of the party, and are to bring the ladies, for I understand her sister accompanies her, on board."

Charles made his grateful acknowledgments to the Captain; the boat was soon ready; the sailors gave them three cheers, as they displayed the union flag: she bounded lightly over the waves, and in a few hours reached the place of her destination.

Mrs. Wynn welcomed our hero with the tenderness of a mother. She had the day before received a letter from Penstock, in which one to him was inclosed. It was from his parents; and while it gave him joy to hear that they were well, it produced in his
mind

mind equal surprise, to find that neither his uncle nor Maria were mentioned, although several other friends were enumerated, and some village anecdotes recited.

"What," said he to himself, "can be the cause of this total silence with respect to persons of whose transactions I have the utmost anxiety to hear? Surely the lovely Maria is dead! fallen a martyr to the brutality of her father, and the perfidy of my uncle." He was almost tempted to have communicated the situation of his mind to Mrs. Wynn, to have besought her to excuse him to the Captain, and to have set out immediately for Penstock; but, as he understood they were not to return to the ship till the next morning, he resolved to give one night to thought upon the subject.

As Lieutenant Gordon, who commanded the boat's crew, had never been in that part of the country before, and at dinner expressed his admiration of the variety of rich scenery which every bend of the river, and every turn of the road presented to the view, it naturally gave rise to a short description of the beautiful gardens of Peirce-

field; but, as they were so near, they resolved not to be satisfied with having their beauties conveyed to them through the cold medium of words. A party was immediately formed, and the scheme carried into effect; therefore, whilst the company are travelling thither, we will take the opportunity to breathe, in order to begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

AMONG the many beautiful seats which contribute to the decoration of our island, perhaps there are few for which nature has done so much, or on which she has been so lavish of her bounty, as on the gardens of Peircefield. Situated on a delightful eminence, and near the confluence of two rivers, which, having in their romantic course fertilized a vast extent of country, join their arms to form the Severn sea, every part of this enchanting spot presents to the eye scenes in which picturesque wildness and luxuriant fertility combine to produce effects that

that convey to the mind the strongest sensations of pleasure : nay even the bold, barren rock, the rugged promontory, the blasted tree, and whitened cottage, have their use, as they serve to form the most majestic foreground, or break the line, and vary the objects which the sublime pencil of Providence hath delineated.

When the party arrived at the mansion, the sun had travelled some hours toward the west : the tops of the trees were illuminated with its beams, while the groves and under-wood beneath, were thrown into the deepest shadow. Hush'd were the winds, the leaves scarcely moved ; not a sound, except those of their own voices, and the various notes of the birds, were heard as they wandered through the long vistas of the gardens. The stillness of the air, the fiery-tinted sky, and glowing atmosphere, seeming to portend a storm, Lieutenant Gordon advised the ladies to retire into the house ; Mr. Trevor attended them ; but Charles was missing.

They called, they repeated his name ; but the only answer they received was from the

re-

reverberation of their own voices through the grottos, the groves, and distant caverns.

The melancholy which clouded the mind of our hero, had induced him, soon after their arrival, to quit the company, and wander to a more remote part of the garden. Here, while he was indulging the luxury of grief, the storm which had been threatened, overtook him; the wind began to assail the trees; the radiance of the sun-beams faded upon the sight; black clouds hung athwart the zenith, from whose bosom vivid flashes of lightning struck the rocks, and were refracted upon the shrubs, from which they skimmed along the ground. The thunder roared, and a torrent of rain began to descend.

Charles, who had some pleasure in contemplating the wreck of elements, now found it was time to seek for shelter; he ran to a grotto, which, through a long, vaulted arch, shining with spars and ores, carried the light to the expansive bosom of the Bristol channel. His eyes were bent toward that sublime object, rendered doubly interesting
by

by the efforts of some vessels that were endeavouring to resist the violence of the storm, when his ears were attracted, and animation almost suspended, while the dulcet accents of a female voice, accompanied by a guitar, sung the following stanza:—

“ Let the distant tempest roar,

“ And surges lash our rocky shore ;

“ The storm that could my passions move,

“ Must have superior force to love.”

As she sung, the fair musician approached.—

Charles turned.—Their eyes met—She gave a shriek, and was falling—He caught her in his arms, exclaiming, “ Good Heaven ! it is Maria !”

He spoke, alas ! to the deaf—The lovely Maria had fainted—No assistance could be procured : his confusion and anxiety were inexpressible ; he called several times in vain ; the last exclamation was more fortunate, as, when he lifted up his eyes, he saw Trevor standing before him.

If the terror of Charles was great, the surprise of Trevor was still greater at beholding his friend with the corpse, as he thought

it,

it, of a beautiful young lady in his arms; over whom he was hanging in the fondest attitude of sorrow,

He asked an explanation.

Charles answered, "Behold Maria!"

This was sufficient for Trevor: he flew out of the cavern for assistance; but, before he had got many paces, he thought it would be better to carry her to the house; he therefore returned to his friend, and taking off his coat, Charles did the same; they covered her with their garments, and in this manner conveyed her to the mansion.

Mrs. Wynn and the company were surprised to see Mr. Trevor, whom the severity of the storm could not restrain from the search of his friend, return with him in the manner they did; but she was still more surprised when she understood who the young lady was, and beheld her beauty, which even inanimation could not obscure. Although the family of Peircefield was absent, from the servants that had the care of the house they received every assistance; and the efforts of Mrs. Wynn and her sister were at last so effectual, that the lovely Maria opened her eyes;

eyes; and, notwithstanding her ideas for some time appeared to be wandering, and her speech incoherent, she gradually recovered to the knowledge of Charles, and a sense of her strange situation.

Suffused with blushes, she arose, and, taking the hand of Mrs. Wynn, intreated her pardon for the trouble and confusion which her emotion, and subsequent illness, had created in her family.

That lady replied, "You labour under a mistake: my family is at some distance. I am, like yourself, a visitor to these gardens, and, though a native of Wales, almost a stranger to this part of the country. You will wonder at that, when I inform you I have in it many relations, and, among the rest, the lovely Maria Asper, whom, till this hour, I have never seen since she was a child."

"Good heaven!" said Maria, "how can this be? My ideas are bewildered: I have met the dear friend of my infancy, who was reported to me to be dead, and am acknowledged as a relation by a lady whose countenance beams with compassion and benevolence—What can this mean?"

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"It means, my lovely girl!" said Mrs. Wynn, embracing her, "that the person who claims you as a relation will act as such. I fear you have been harshly treated; how came you in this place? Who are you with at present?"

"I am," replied Maria, "with a sister of my mother's."

"With Mrs. Wilmot!"

"With her," she continued; "she prevailed upon my father to suffer me to reside with her."

"Where?"

"At a small house near this place. The fineness of the afternoon tempted me to indulge in a solitary walk in the gardens; the storm drove me to seek shelter in the grotto; but by what means I met with my earliest, my dearest friend, Charles Edwin, I am at a loss to conjecture."

"The hand of Providence, my dear Maria," said he, folding his arms around her, "directed me to the spot. Ah! would to heaven that we were no more to part. Great, I have heard, have been your sufferings. Nor have I been without my share

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in them; but that is fully over-paid by the bliss that plays around my heart at this minute, when I see you in some degree recovered, and still Maria Asper."

"Thank heaven, my dear Charles," said Maria, deeply blushing, "that you do see me so! My sufferings have indeed been great; I hope that they are now ended; but on that subject no more at present. I must return to my aunt; we shall surely meet again."

"Meet again! I will not stir from this spot till * * *."

"Hold! hold! young man," said Lieutenant Gordon, interrupting him, "you are under my command, and must positively return on board to-morrow morning; at the same time I confess that I feel so much for your situation, that it is with reluctance I exert my authority, and promise you to use my influence to procure you leave of absence from Captain Wynn for as long as you can be spared."

"I ratify that promise to the fullest extent," said Mrs. Wynn; "but as the evening begins to advance, let us see this dear girl

girl to the place of her residence, and endeavour to take such measures as may ensure her future happiness.

Leaning upon the arm of her lover, and supported on the other side by Trevor, the fair Maria was conducted to her aunt. Mrs. Wynn proposed that the Lieutenant and Midshipman should return to the inn, and leave them to the care of Charles, whom she introduced to Mrs. Wilmot. At the name of Edwin that lady started, and instantly guessed from what source the paleness and discomposure of her niece had arisen. She received him with more than politeness, with friendship; and the lovers passed an evening together which, they thought, made them a large amends for the former troubles they had undergone.

Mrs. Wilmot, as she had for some years chosen to be called, was a maiden lady, verging towards fifty, and the elder sister of Maria's mother. She had been in her youth uncommonly beautiful, and still retained sufficient traces of it to counteract the efforts of time, and make her appear many years younger than she really was.

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In the heyday of her charms she had, for what reason never came to our knowledge, refused several great offers; and not only refused them, but treated her lovers with a loftiness and cruelty which caused the gallants of the principality, and its vicinity, to call her by the appellation of the haughty Cambrian.

Indeed she was a woman of considerable spirit, and seemed to reign tyrant of her little domain, till her vassals, one by one, shrunk from her; and, by holding the reins of government too tight, she found that she had annihilated all her subjects except one.

Our readers will stare when we inform them, that that one was that universal gallant Mr. Edwin, uncle to our hero.

At the time that he made his addresses to Miss Wilmot, his character was pretty generally known; his conquests had extended far and wide, and, multiplied by the voice of fame, had reached the ears of that lady; yet, strange as it may seem, neither his gallantry nor inconstancy seemed to give her that detestation of his principles which might have

have been expected. In fact, she deemed him a prize worthy of her prowess, and was resolved to conquer, and reclaim him.

From such resolutions many misfortunes have arisen to the fair sex!

Happy it was for the beautiful Jane Wilmot, that she escaped unscathed from so dangerous an experiment!

Mr. Edwin, as it may be supposed, made the most honourable proposals to her, although, in reality, nothing was further from his thoughts than matrimony.

He had taken some pains to study the disposition of the sex in general, and this lady's in particular. He saw that it was to be a kind of amorous warfare between them, and took his measures accordingly; but whether he was too incautious in his mode of attack, or that the fair Cambrian had more penetration than he gave her credit for, is uncertain: All that we know is, that he was dismissed with the utmost contempt and disgrace from his attendance; and that she ever after, when his name was mentioned, spoke of him as a reptile that ought to be spurned from society.

She

She was not in a much better humour with Mr. Asper, whose ill usage of her sister we mentioned in the beginning of this story; and when that lady died, all communication ceased between her and the widower, except one letter a year, which she wrote to enquire after her niece, whom she had endeavoured, but without effect, to have under her protection.

At an early period of life she bid adieu to all thoughts of matrimony, and divided her time between Bath, and a small but delightful house which she had near Chepstow; in either of which places she had talents and accomplishments sufficient to make her company a valuable accession to the most elegant society.

Her repose was at length disturbed by the rumours which reached her ears of the marriage of Mr. Edwin and her niece. Supposing, as indeed was at first reported, that the young lady had consented to, what she called, such a preposterous union, she flew into a rage, and treated the name of the distressed Maria with as much harshness as she did that of her father.

A few

A few days gave another turn to her temper; the cruelty of Mr. Asper to his daughter was a theme which resounded from the shores of Pembroke-shire, to the banks of the Severn. The report, which was magnified by every medium through which it passed, from Penstock to Chepstow, when it reached Mrs. Wilmot, was, that owing to the perseverance of Mr. Edwin, and the ill usage of her father, Maria was actually dead. Equally shocked and irritated at the news, she resolved to inform herself, on the spot, of the truth of it. In consequence of this resolution, she ordered a carriage, and in a few hours arrived at the door of Mr. Asper's mansion, which she found beset with a croud which the alarm that the situation of the young lady had created, had drawn together. They were loud in their execrations of the cruel father; and as Mr. Edwin had prudently retired from the place, they revenged themselves upon the windows of his house, and the enclosures surrounding his plantations. Mrs. Wilmot at length gained admittance, and found matters much better than they had been reported to her; as her
niece,

niece, though extremely, was not, as the physicians said, dangerously ill. Mr. Asper had been exceedingly frightened, not for Maria, but himself; and his fright had so far humbled him, that he not only bore with patience the asperity with which his sister-in-law treated him, but promised, as soon as his daughter recovered, that she should be put under her direction.

Perhaps this promise, which was communicated to Maria, contributed, more than the medicines that were administered to effect her recovery.

She knew that the house of her aunt was a place in which even the name of her persecutor would not be mentioned, except to execrate it. She also knew that in her she should acquire a kind protectress, a tender friend, and, more than all, a confident to whom she could communicate her passion for Charles; who would sooth her grief, repress her anxiety, and, through whose medium, she might perhaps sometimes hear of him.

She saw with joy the morning arrive on which she was to depart from a mansion ren-

dered detestable to her by her father's cruelty : But as the old gentleman's fears had subsided, upon her recovery, his resolution to consign her to Mrs. Wilmot began to waver, and it required the exertion of all the spirit which that lady possessed, to make him fulfil his promise.

In the elegant retreat of her aunt, the health of the lovely Maria mended apace : She was indeed every thing to her that her most ardent wishes had foreboded. Tender, attentive, engaging, she soothed her sorrows, as to her she laid open all the secrets of her heart. Warmly interested in the narrative, which displayed the workings of an ingenuous mind from infancy, she made her repeat her story ; and dwelt, with peculiar sympathy, upon that part of it which described the growth and violence of her passion for Charles ; but she could scarcely retain her temper when she heard of the perfidy of Mr. Edwin to his nephew, and his cruel perseverance in his suit to Maria, after the most solemn and decisive rejection.

Resolved to do every thing in her power to favour the union of the young lovers, she

sent

sent to London, to his parents, and to Plymouth, to enquire after the Burford, and our hero: but of the latter she could not gain any intelligence. It appeared that he was, either from illness, or some cause more fatal, rendered incapable of writing, or that the letters he had sent had miscarried.

In the melancholy and suspense which this news created in the mind of Maria, even the company of her aunt became a burthen, and she frequently sought that relief which solitude has been known to afford to a heart overloaded with care. The gardens of Piercefield, while the glowing scenery and picturesque beauties sometimes, for a moment, called her thoughts from the contemplation of her misfortunes, also afforded her ample room for meditation, and at length became the scene of her greatest happiness, as in them she met her beloved Charles; and, in consequence of that meeting, was assured that his bosom was inflamed with a more violent passion than even that which warmed and animated her own.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

ALTHOUGH it was impossible that Charles, during the evening which he spent with Maria, could have much private conversation, he found an opportunity to make an appointment for the next morning. Mrs. Wilmot was by no means an early riser, and his departure to the ship depended upon the tide, which, fortunately for the lovers, did not serve till ten o'clock. They met at six, and without entering into the particulars of an interview which had lasted above two hours, but which to them did not seem ten minutes, it may be sufficient to remark, that the lovely and artless Maria recapitulated all the troubles, distress, and anxiety, she had undergone from the persecution of Mr. Edwin, the cruelty of her father, and her fears for himself. Charles in his turn related all the secret workings of his soul, his reluctance to leave Penstock, the pains he took to obtain a sight of her, the alarm which the knowledge of his uncle's character, obtained through the medium of Trevor, gave him; the poignant distress he felt at the

the news which he accidentally heard from the sailor, and his consequent illness.

This was a moment of peculiar softness, a moment sufficient to repay years of anxiety. Their sufferings and sensations endeared them still more to each other. Folded in each others arms, how often did they repeat their vows of eternal fidelity. They would have ratified those vows at the altar, but, alas ! neither of them was of age ; and Maria knew to attempt to obtain the consent of her father would separate them for ever.

Mr. Asper had not a very good opinion of mankind in general, but if there was one being he hated more than the rest, it was Charles Edwin. That young gentleman also guessed that his father had, upon his account, entered into pecuniary obligations, which would make him cautious how he offended a temper so violent and implacable as his brother's. While they were thus communicating their different ideas, and strengthening each other in the resolution to wait till they should be free from parental restraint, Mrs. Wilmot entered the room ; her countenance beamed with smiles, as she turned her eyes with

the greatest good humour and complacency upon the lovers. "You have," she said, "had a long, and, doubtless, an interesting conversation; and although I by no means wish to disturb you in the moments of happiness, which I know by woeful experience are in this life very few, yet I must confess anxiety upon your account, my dear Maria, and reflections upon the situation of both, hath caused me to rise rather before my usual hour."

Maria replied, "that so far from an interruption, her presence was a pleasure to her, as it gave her an opportunity to acknowledge, before Charles, the many obligations she was under to her, not only for her timely rescue from oppression and cruelty, but for her subsequent tenderness and affection."

Charles threw himself on his knees, and taking the hand of Mrs. Wilmot, "give me leave, Madam," said he, "to thank you for the protection of Maria, the companion of my infancy, the dear friend of my youth, and the only object of a passion as pure as it will be permanent."

Mrs.

Mrs. Wilmot raised our hero, and folding her arms around both the lovers, said, "My dear children, while I rejoice in a passion which seems calculated to ensure your future happiness, permit me to ask you what plan you have formed in order to guard against events that may again separate you from each other?"

Charles said, "that, determined to abide by her opinion, they had not formed any. Maria had indeed proposed to wait till they were of age, and as he could not oppose anything to the justice of her remarks upon the harshness of her father, he had reluctantly consented."

"You have in that respect," she replied, "done well; but as I consider life too short, happiness too fugitive, to suffer us to dally with time, hear what I have also to propose, which doubtless will be agreeable to you, and, I think, will not be objected to by my niece. As I am of opinion that all the melancholy hours of my life have ensued in consequence of being thwarted in an early passion, I must confess that I have the greatest sensibility for others in similar situations.

tions. I would therefore not only furnish you with the means of going, but accompany you in a journey to Scotland, were it not that in a country like ours, where every event, however trivial, becomes the subject of general conversation, such a circumstance would make a considerable noise: now as the affair cannot, at least for some time, be kept too secret, I should think it would be better for me to do what I have had some thoughts of doing; that is, to take my niece to London. In the bustle of that great metropolis, the actions of individuals are little observed. After a short residence the banns could be there published; in the mean while you will probably come round with the ship; you may therefore easily meet us in town, where I hope I shall have the happiness to see you united."

Charles again threw himself on his knees, and poured out his thanks to Mrs. Wilmot in a strain of rapture.

"As Maria promised to be guided by her aunt, he took his leave in the highest elevation of spirits, and joining Mrs. Wynn and his friends, the beauty of the morning was rendered

rendered doubly brilliant by the hilarity of his mind. As they rowed down the Channel every object seemed to have assumed a new face; the views were more delightful, the waves more placid, the air more serene, and the company more agreeable, than in any situation he had ever experienced before.

Poor Maria was not in the same rapturous exultation, although the image of Charles had mingled with all her ideas, even from infancy, and as they had "grown with her growth," the thought of being his wife, she had considered, as the *summum bonum* of human happiness; and although that happiness seemed now to be within her reach, yet there was something in the means by which it was to be acquired that shocked her; she shrunk from the idea of a clandestine marriage. However, when she revolved in her mind, her situation, her dependence upon her aunt, the harshness of her parent, and, more than all, the detestable addresses of Mr. Edwin, she concluded that no situation could be so bad as that to which the mandate of her father might recal her, she resolved therefore to acquiesce, and submit

mitting her future destiny to the will of Providence, turn her thoughts only to the bright side of the prospect, and suffer her bosom to expand, and receive that glow of joy which the torch of love had lighted in that of Charles.

Mrs. Wilmot, whose temper we have before observed was warm and animated, had also a large fund of good nature, and a great share of affection for her niece. In the plan she had laid, she had two objects in view; one was apparent, and had for its basis the promotion of what she thought would contribute to the happiness of the young couple; the other lay deeper, and was, perhaps, concealed even from herself; but if so, it was not hid from the muse, whose pervading eye discovered that she would receive considerable satisfaction in totally disappointing the hopes of Mr. Edwin. When that gentleman's passion for her niece was first mentioned, it was, perhaps, truly described as raging with the greatest violence. She remembered that he had once entertained as violent a passion for herself, nor had she forgotten the means by which he sought the gratifica-
tion

tion of it. Though many years had elapsed, the insult had neither been obliterated from her mind, nor forgiven. She still detested his character; she still hoped that the hour would arrive when it would be in her power to revenge the affront. She therefore heard with particular satisfaction the rumours which were spread of Maria's firm rejection of him; entered warmly into the cause of her niece; rejoiced that the melancholy report of her death was unfounded; and, after she had brought her to Chepstow, was in raptures when she mentioned her affection for Charles, and promised her all the assistance in her power.

Our readers have already, in part, and will, in the subsequent pages, more fully see how well she kept her word. In a few days she set out with Maria for Bath, whence they proceeded to London, where a lodging had been previously taken for them, and where Mrs. Wilmot prepared to carry into execution the scheme which was to be the result of their journey.

Mr. Asper, at this period, was confined by the gout. Mr. Edwin was absent nobody

knew where, and the former gentleman so much an object of detestation that no one in the neighbourhood would visit him. In the solitude and seclusion of his own chamber he neither heard of the arrival of the Burford, in Kings-Road, nor of the retreat of his daughter, till a considerable time after these events had happened. He endeavoured to come at dates as well as the inaccuracy of his informers would suffer him, and found, to his great satisfaction, that the ladies left Chestow about the time that the said ship arrived: another idea contributed to give him pleasure, and that was that Maria, of whose openness of temper he was convinced, had discovered to her aunt her passion for Charles, and that she disapproved of it. "Disappointed herself:" said he in a tone of exultation, "I should not wonder if that cross old maid should endeavour to repress all matrimonial ideas in the girl. I dare say she took this journey on purpose to keep her out of the way of Charles Edwin. With such a fiery dragon to guard her, I fancy I may sleep in security upon the account of Maria, as, I dare say, no gallant will venture himself

self within the reach of her tongue, or, if he should offend her, her talons."

A few days further confirmed him in this opinion, as at that period the arrival of young Edwin at the house of his parents was announced to him; he now more than ever rejoiced in the absence of his daughter, because he was more than ever certain that the cause of it arose from the reasons he had conjectured.

The parents of Charles had a more substantial source of joy in the arrival of their son. Nay, so truly were they beloved, that all the inhabitants of Penstock partook of their felicity.

Captain and Mrs. Edwin had long been considered as a perfect pattern of connubial happiness. Though their fortune was contracted, their benevolence was great, and by an elegant œconomy only practised, and, perhaps, only practicable by those that possess internal peace, they contrived not only to live in the genteelest style, but to extend their bounty to many indigent objects around them. No contrast was ever more striking than that which the cottage-like house of the
Captain,

Captain, and the magnificent mansion of his brother, presented. You might in them discover strong traits of the dispositions of the owners. Embosomed deep in trees, the latter seemed to recede from the eye in solitary state and gloomy grandeur, while every object around exhibited marks of irregularity and disorder.

The former surrounded by gardens and fields smiling with plenty, and corrected by cultivation, seemed the abode of peace and happiness. When Charles entered the small gate he heaved a sigh, and ejaculated to himself, "Such a cottage as this, with Maria, would be bliss indeed!" He had scarcely finished this short sentence, ere he found himself in the arms of his father and mother.

The reader, of sensibility, will easily figure to his mind the glow of happiness which this meeting diffused over the bosoms of the parties concerned.

To the parents that happiness was without alloy, they saw their son, the object in whom all their fond, their aspiring hopes and wishes centered, returned with every mental and personal improvement that in the most
extra-

extravagant moments of ideal delusion the pencil of fancy could have depicted: They saw that the partiality with which they regarded him was extended beyond their own little demesnes, and that he was the idol of the neighbourhood; they looked forward to the time when his virtues and talents would be called into action, with the most pleasing assurance that if, which was not very probable, any circumstance should happen to bar his succession to his uncle's estate, he would, by his merit, raise the fortune of the younger branch of the family as much above that of the elder, as its fame was already elevated.

Charles, although he had, perhaps, far greater cause for exultation, was not quite so much at ease. He had apprehensions which he could not describe, and sensations unfelt before. The possession of Maria seemed so great, so unexpected a blessing, that he was fearful it would never be realized. He did not dare to communicate his situation, even to his mother, although she had given him every encouragement when she described the sufferings of that young lady from the persecution

cution of Mr. Edwin, and exulted with him in her having escaped from so unsuitable a union by the interference of a relation who had the humanity and spirit to protect her. He had another cause of uneasiness, which arose from some hints that dropped in the course of this conversation, and which afterwards were more fully explained. He now understood that his father, at the time of his reconciliation with his uncle, had accepted a large sum of money, part of which was employed to fit him out and smooth his entrance into the world, and the remainder to complete a purchase which he had long had in contemplation. For this sum merely, as Mr. Edwin said, as a matter of form, the Captain had given a bond: Upon which bond, since his repulse from Maria, Mr. Flay, his agent, had given notice that judgment would be entered up if the obligation was not discharged within three months.

Although the Captain had no very good opinion of his brother's morals, and had had frequent occasion to remark a shrewdness and cunning by which he had always been duped in their pecuniary transactions, this was such
a piece

a piece of cool duplicity, of deliberate villainy, that he could not give credit to it; he thought the agent had exceeded his commission, and was certain that at his first meeting with Mr. Edwin, an explanation would take place which would set all matters to rights.

Charles was not quite so sanguine; always taught to consider his uncle as harsh and morose, what he had lately heard had not only confirmed him in that opinion, but had so much strengthened his aversion, that he thought him capable of any villany; he therefore, without explaining his sentiments, urged his father to dispose of the estate he had purchased, and, in short, by every method he could devise, endeavour to raise the money in order to be prepared for the worst. Had he done so, it would, perhaps, have been better for every party: but as the Captain, artless himself, could not suspect his brother of such a total dereliction of principle, and was besides habitually dilatory in matters of business, he put off the evil hour from day to day, having an excuse, at least

to

to himself, for his conduct, namely that he waited the arrival of his brother.

The three weeks which Charles had dedicated to a visit to his parents and friends, at Penstock, were now nearly elapsed, during which period he had frequently heard from Maria, his heart bounded with joy as the happy hour when he should call her his own Maria approached. The correspondence between these amiable young people by discovering more fully their talents, and their sentiments, endeared them still more to each other.

A letter from Captain Wynn, announcing the arrival of the ship at Portsmouth, was the signal for his departure. He took leave of his friends and native village, and posted, not, as his father and mother supposed, toward Portsmouth, but to London, where he arrived with all that fervor of exultation and joy with which the occasion may be supposed to inspire a youthful heart.

He flew directly to Maria, he found her, good Heavens! how did he find her? Convinced that there are minutes which repay whole

whole years of anxiety, we can only inform our readers that these were some of them. Mrs. Wilmot soon after entered the room; the thanks of our hero to that lady were too ardent to be regular or coherent; however they pleased nevertheless for the vivacity with which they were delivered. She was greatly affected with the situation of the lovers, whose hands she joined, and appointed the next day, which at the intercession of Maria, who had a predilection for Thursday, was postponed to that, which was the day after, for the celebration of their nuptials.

It would be little to the purpose to endeavour to develope the fears, hopes, doubts, anxiety and joy, that pervaded the minds of the lovers during an interval in which Charles thought the hours longer than any that had ever before passed: however, whether time flies or limps, we well know that nothing can stop the current of it; slow as the hours dragged, they at length elapsed: The sun gilded the morn of Thursday, Charles led his blushing bride, attended by Mrs. Wilmot, and a friend of that lady's, to church. The ceremony

ceremony was performed which made him the happiest of mankind; the timid Maria supported herself very well till she took the pen in her trembling hand to sign the register, when a tear fell from her eye and obliterated the name of Edwin which Charles had just written. She feared this was a baleful omen, but her perturbation and diffidence at length fled before the soothing of her aunt and the tenderness of her husband; the day was spent in that rational hilarity which refined minds can only know,—and as it draws toward a close, we shall take the opportunity to close the chapter.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

HOW are those to be envied who possess that sunshine of the mind which arises, and can only arise, from innocence and virtue. With them every care is thrown to a far, very far distance, every prospect is irradiated. Happy in themselves, even the smallest incident becomes a source of amusement,
the

the most trifling change of scene or circumstance a source of happiness.

This, in this great change of her fortune, was still the case with the lovely Maria. She had never lived till now, her existence had been a blank; at least, in the bliss of the present hour, all her former sorrows were forgotten. Charles equally enraptured was equally disposed to think they had bid a long, a last adieu to care and anxiety, to date existence from the present happy era, and to look forward to the bright prospects, which, from the auspicious morn of Thursday, had dawned upon his mind.

In the pleasing delirium of love the light pinioned weeks had fled almost unperceived by either Charles or Maria, who, encircled in each others arms, seemed to have forgotten not only former sorrows and anxieties, but former connexions, when Mrs. Wilmot, who was rather more in her senses, and who was fearful that her long absence should give a suspicion to Mr. Asper, proposed their return to Chepstow; at the same instant a letter came from Captain Wynn to summon our hero on board the ship, which was preparing

to sail upon another expedition. Here was some alloy to the bliss of the young lovers; here was at least a circumstance to convince them that they were mortal. To part, even at a remote period, had never entered into their ideas; but so suddenly, was impossible. Charles positively declared, that nothing should force him to comply with the requisition of the Captain, a resolution exceedingly commended by Maria, who expressed as great a reluctance to return to Monmouthshire. Mrs. Wilmot now found that she had undertaken a task to which her sympathetic temper rendered her unequal, and that it was much easier to join than separate lovers: yet, as she looked much further into futurity than they did, she also knew that a separation, though perhaps not immediately, would be ultimately necessary. To render so bitter a dose in some degree palatable, she proposed waiting on Mrs. Wynn, who was just arrived in town, to endeavour to persuade her to intercede with the Captain for another month on the part of Charles. Although the three weeks had so quickly flown, yet, throwing the time of separation to

to

to the distance of a month, was, in the lovers scale of calculation, like putting it off to eternity. They therefore joyfully acceded to the plan she proposed, and Mrs. Wynn, who had been sufficiently acquainted with the affairs of the young people to guess their situation, undertook on the part of the Captain to grant the furlough required.

To the letters which came from Penstock to the ship, and were by Mr. Trevor, who was on board, forwarded to our hero, Charles returned regular answers through the same medium, but he was much surprized to find that his uncle had not been heard of; and greatly vexed at the information his mother conveyed, that Mr. Flay had hinted that as the three months were nearly expired, he hoped the Captain would be prepared, as it would extremely distress *his feelings* to be obliged to enforce the payment of the bond. He fully understood the meaning of this menace, and respectfully urged his father to endeavour by the sale of some part of his property to raise the money, at the same time that he treated his uncle's character with

with a freedom which he had never done before.

He now also saw the necessity which there was for keeping the connection betwixt him and Maria a profound secret, in the strongest light; and indeed almost wished he had not joined with her in requesting Mrs. Wilmot to obtain a longer leave of absence: but the moment she entered the room, and he observed the joy which that lady's success had diffused over her countenance, he flew to embrace her, and in that embrace, Penstock, his father, his uncle, the bond, and every thing was forgotten.

They had hitherto lived in the greatest seclusion during the time they had been in London, which, however pleasant it might be to the young couple, was certainly dull to Mrs. Wilmot, therefore it is not much to be wondered, that that lady gave way to the persuasion of Mrs. Wynn, and occasionally partook of some of the public amusements, and at length induced her niece to join their party. One evening these ladies being desirous to see Drury-lane theatre, had

taken

taken places in the front boxes. Charles who durst not be seen abroad in their company, but was fond of being at least within view of Maria, had placed himself in the pit.

Between the first and second acts, as he cast his eyes around, he discovered in one of the upper side boxes the figure of a gentleman who bore a great resemblance to his uncle, and was eagerly gazing upon that box which contained his Maria. Astonished at the similitude he kept his eyes fixed upon him, and when the act began, on his turning toward the stage, was convinced it was the individual Mr. Edwin.

His appearance not only damped the spirits and disconcerted the pleasure of our hero for the evening, but produced reflections upon what might be the probable consequence of their rencontre, should they happen to meet. As the play had ceased to amuse, he turned from the stage and closely observed the gentleman whose appearance had produced in his mind such disagreeable sensations.

He found that Maria, more than the drama, seemed to be the object that attracted his attention. Just before the curtain dropped Charles had involuntarily turned his eyes to the stage for a few moments, and upon again recurring to the box he missed his uncle. While he was considering whether he ought to be glad or sorry that he had left the house, he looked toward that which contained Maria, and to his great astonishment beheld him in earnest conversation with her. He made an effort to quit his seat in order to join the company; but a moment's reflection convinced him of the imprudence of such a step, and chained him down. His agitation during the scene will be easier conceived than described. Mr. Edwin, he observed, spoke to Mrs. Wynn, but when he addressed Mrs. Wilmot, she absolutely turned her back upon him.

Suffering both for Maria and himself, how did the time seem to drag before the final close of the drama permitted him to depart. Though Mr. Edwin had left the theatre some time, he saw, or thought he saw, a
cloud

cloud hang upon the brow of Maria, which he judged had been produced by the conversation just mentioned. Instead of going to Mrs. Wynn's, as had been settled, he hurried home, and to his great satisfaction was soon after joined by Mrs. Wilmot and his lovely bride, whose palpitation and uneasiness had occasioned this alteration of their plan. When she entered the room, she threw herself into his arms, and said, "Oh, Charles, our hours of happiness are over; my father has commanded me to return!"

"How is that possible?" he replied, "Where is the mandate? Who was the messenger?"

"That wretch," said Mrs. Wilmot, "from whom only mischief and disagreeable tidings can be expected, Mr. Edwin."

"He came into the box with an effrontery which he only could assume, and attempted to speak to me. You may well start! I should have been as much surprised as you are had I not heretofore known that he would go any length to gratify malignity; I gave him a look that seemed for a moment to repress his assurance; he then turned to

Mrs. Wynn, from whom he met with a cool reception, and lastly to Maria."

"What did he say to Maria?" said Charles, with the utmost impatience.

"He began," replied Maria, "in an under tone of voice, as if endeavouring to repress either his passion or his feelings, and, producing a letter, informed me he had yesterday heard from my father, who had commissioned him to tell me that as his health was precarious he was uneasy at my long stay in London, in which place he was convinced neither myself nor my protectress were engaged in any laudable pursuit. That he peremptorily insisted upon my return home, which if my aunt did not chuse to do, he did not know any one in whom he could so far confide, or who was so proper to conduct me to Wales, as himself."

"Himself!" said Charles, "I would forget the tie of relationship, dissolve all connection, and with this arm oppose and punish him should he dare to attempt it!"

"For heavens sake! for my sake! my dear Charles!" said Maria, throwing her arms round him, "repress this fury; I declare

clare you frighten me ten times more than he did!"

"Though I am sorry my dear niece to see you thus affected," returned Mrs. Wilmot, "I applaud the conduct of your husband, I admire his spirit, and will join with him to protect you from the machinations of a wretch who is deservedly an object of universal detestation."

"Granted!" said Maria, "and nothing in the world should force me to place the least confidence in, or have the slightest communication with him, but surely you would not encourage Charles to throw off the mask which has hitherto concealed us, and avow himself my protector, knowing as you do the mischiefs that may ensue from such a conduct."

"You need not fear, my dear Maria," he replied, "that I should do any thing to increase the uneasiness of a bosom in which all my bliss is centered, therefore repress your emotion and inform me what reply you made to him."

"I said that the communication from my father coming through the channel it

now

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did,

did, could have no weight with me; that my sentiments of him were already well known, and that nothing but his personal command should drag me to the detested place of my nativity; detested, because it was within the verge of the residence of a man from whose appearance at my father's house I dated all my sorrows."

"What answer did he make to that?" said Charles.

"He seemed greatly irritated," continued Maria, "his countenance changed, and for some moments he was either lost in thought, or hindered by passion from replying; at length he said, that the time was near at hand when I should be forced to repent of two circumstances, my predilection in favour of that idle dissolute young man his nephew, whom he knew to be in town, and my cruelty to himself. That if nothing but my father's personal command could prevail with me to quit the dangerous connection I had formed, and the dangerous situation in which I stood at present, I might depend upon soon seeing him in town: but, said he, as there is another person whom

whom you will see much sooner, tell that villain Charles, that his steps have been watched, his haunts are known, and that all his transactions since he left the ship have been so many steps toward that vengeance which will soon fall to crush both his father and himself. At these words he quitted the box with a fury that turned the eyes of the audience toward the door through which he had vanished."

"Poor Maria," said Mrs. Wilmot, "remained almost insensible, and had it not been for the exertions of Mrs. Wynn, and some ladies in the box, would have fainted; a circumstance the latter attributed in some degree to the heat, and with great humanity assisted her to the lobby, where she sat till, as you see, she is tolerably recovered."

"Indeed," replied Charles, "I do not see that! Her countenance tells me that she is more alive to the evils that impend, and feels in a stronger sense our present situation than you imagine: what can we do?"

"We must part!" my dear Charles, said Maria, wringing her hands, "We must part! at least for a short time."

"Let me rather own our marriage! let me glory in calling the lovely Maria mine, and having a husband's right to protect her!"

"That," said Mrs. Wilmot, "would be very imprudent in your present situation; while I live my niece shall never want a protectress, and were she of age she should reside entirely with me: so she may until that period arrives, if we only act with common discretion. Whatsoever Mr. Edwin may have heard of you, it is impossible that he can be acquainted with the grand secret; and it would be as I observed very imprudent to make him so, as I understand the Captain, your father, to be much in his power, and your future fortune in some degree to depend upon him."

"My father," said Charles, "is unfortunately so: but as to dependence upon such a man I detest the very idea of it, and for future fortune I despise it!"

"Give us, my dear Maria," he continued, taking her in his arms, "such a cottage, or even a smaller than that of my parents, where, retired from the world, out of the reach of malignity, we may live only for each

each other, and the few friends by whom we are surrounded, and I would thus early in life bid adieu to all ambitious views, would look without envy on the possessors of the large estates of Asper, and Edwin, and, bending my mind to our situation, be thankful to the Almighty for the good he has bestowed, and rejoice in that happiness which we should find in the pursuits of virtue, and the practice of benevolence, in a small but well chosen circle of acquaintance, and in fulfilling those duties which domestic life require."

"So would I!" said Maria, in rapture, "you have, my dear Charles, breathed the accents of my soul! you have spoken my very sentiments!"

"I am sorry, my dear niece to interrupt you," returned Mrs. Wilmot, "but must remark that the philosophy of Charles and yourself is exactly that of a couple under the age of twenty-one. At that gay period, I know it by experience, all sublunary things vanish before the god of love; I would at your age have resigned an empire, and have retired to a cottage with a youth

as like you, Charles, in person, as he is opposite to you in disposition. But, although I never was in your happy situation, a life which has not passed without observation enables me to say, that, however we may at our first entrance into the world despise estates, houses, fortune, dependencies, and contingencies, there are periods when these things will be found to have their weight in the human system. No one can look so far into futurity as to say to what they shall rise or be reduced. The condition of this life is always changing, and the chance of a moment may bring opulence or distress in its train, therefore it is prudent to be prepared against the worst. I have said thus much in order to induce you to listen to the advice I shall give you, which is to separate immediately."

"Impossible!" said Charles and Maria, at the same instant.

"However disagreeable," continued Mrs. Wilmot, "it certainly is not impossible, and I dare say when you have considered what I have said, you will see the necessity for such a measure; you Charles will return to your ship,

ship, while my niece and myself, taking Bath in our way where we shall stay a short time, proceed to Chepstow. In a few months you will meet again.

“ A few months !” sighed Maria ; which sigh was re-echoed by her husband.

“ It gives me the greatest pain,” said Mrs. Wilmot, “ to separate two young people whom I so much esteem, but in the present instance passion must give way to prudence : you will think of what I have said, and be prepared in the morning for that event which we all foresaw must happen sooner or later. I shall, before I retire, give orders for our journey.”

Charles and Maria seeing that their aunt was peremptory, and indeed having nothing to oppose to the prudential part of her arguments, withdrew, and sought that consolation from each other of which they both stood so much in need.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

IN the checkered and variegated scene of this transitory life, whether we consider human nature individually or collectively, how small is the proportion which the happiness bears to the misery of mankind.

If we look up even to stations the most exalted we shall perhaps view the persons that fill them with envy, as they display to the eye what are by the generality of mankind considered as the principal ingredients of happiness, wealth, and its concomitants, titles, pomp, splendour, and a long train of advantages, which unbounded opulence alone can give.

Those that formerly took only a superficial view of the state and magnificence of some neighbouring princes, must, at that period of their exaltation, have pronounced them happy; yet late events have shewn that they only beheld the brilliant side of the picture; that, even then, it was deeply shadowed with care, and that every trace of it has since been totally obliterated.

To those who feel not for the fate of kings and empires, who consider them as persons and things too elevated to come within the scope of their observation, and have only a tear for domestic woe, for such sorrows as common life will always supply, and common observation will always find, we recommend the few subsequent pages of this story; at the same time that we observe it is with reluctance we proceed to add another example to the many that have been already adduced to prove the futility of human bliss, by painting the woes of Charles and Maria; woes which have made the stronger impression upon our bosoms, as we do not hold the pen of fiction, but merely record events of which many of the principal circumstances are still in circulation in the country in which the scene of them is laid.

The heavy clouds that hung upon the morn of separation at length withdrew; the sun had, with a pale and sickly ray, illuminated the drawing room in which Mrs. Wilmot was seated at the breakfast-table, when Mrs. Wynn, whose company she had requested the preceding evening, was announced;

nounced ; and soon after the young couple made their appearance. They seemed to have obtained some degree of composure, though the tear stole from the eye of Maria when she informed her aunt that she was ready to obey her commands.

It was settled that they should immediately begin their journey, and Charles was consigned to the care of Mrs. Wynn, who humanely invited him to her house for the few days that business, which he had hitherto neglected, would detain him in town. In consequence of this arrangement, the chaise which was to convey the lovely Maria from a place that had been the scene of the only few happy days which she had passed in her life, and from a husband the source of that happiness, was soon at the door. To those that have experienced the pangs of separation, it would be nugatory to attempt to describe the feelings of this young couple, because words must convey a very inadequate idea of them ; and those that have not, would, for the same reason, have as little cause to be satisfied.

There

There are sentiments and situations which are equally out of the reach of the pen and the pencil ; that face may be wrapped in a cloak in which, to express the passions, would foil the exertions of the greatest artist, and the workings of the mind may be left to the imaginations of the readers, where the poet or historian supposes they will do more justice to them than they could by the most florid or elaborate description.

Poor Maria ! she thought herself a heroine, but the moment Charles approached to take a last embrace, she relapsed into a woman, and, bursting into tears, sunk in his arms. When she had a little recovered, he supported her to the chaise, and resigned her as a sailor, yielding to the storm, quits his last faithful plank, and sinks to rise no more. Mrs. Wilmot had before seated herself, and the husband had taken the hand of his wife, on which he dropped the last tear ; when at that instant Mr. Edwin passed. His eyes shot fire, though a malignant smile played upon his countenance. Charles would have spoken to him, but in the moment that he turned to Maria, to bid her and Mrs. Wilmot adieu,

adieu, he was gone. The carriage now drove off, and he seemed as if he remained alone in the world.

Pursuing it with his eyes, it is uncertain how long he would have stayed in the street, had he not been roused by the voice of Mrs. Wynn, who desired him to return to the drawing-room; he obeyed; and after he had arranged matters for his own removal, attended that lady to her house.

There is a propensity in the human mind, when it has lost what it had esteemed the greatest of blessings, to revert to the next, though of an inferior degree. All the consolation which Charles expected in this hour of affliction was derived from the hope of the constant correspondence of Maria. He looked forward with the fondest impatience to the hour when he should receive a letter from her; that hour came at last, and had a far greater effect upon his spirits than all the kind assiduities of Mrs. Wynn, or all the amusements which that lady procured for him. A second letter came to his hand the day that he was setting out for Portsmouth. His fair correspondent was at Bath, well,
and

and as happy as she could be in his absence : this letter was written with an ease and spirit which had such an effect upon his mind that he departed from town with an hilarity which he had not before experienced since she had been absent. At Portsmouth he heard news that increased his satisfaction : Captain Wynn informed him that the cruize of the Burford was countermanded, as that ship had received so much damage in a gale of wind, that it would make it necessary for her to go into dock in a short time ; and that while she was laid up he should have the liberty to see his friends ; to one of whom he said, with a smile, he understood he paid very particular attention.

This was esteemed by Charles such a fortunate event that he instantly sat down to communicate it to Maria, whom he was resolved, at any risk, to spend the promised time with. This epistle, warm from the heart, was instantly dispatched ; and in that agreeable suspense which precedes the expectation of pleasure, he waited with impatience for an answer. A fortnight had elapsed, in the course of which he had written
again ;

again; but, alas! no answer was returned. He waited almost another week: Maria was certainly ill! dead, perhaps! He was resolved to know the worst! he represented his situation to the Captain, who gave him leave of absence. Just as he was upon the point of leaving the ship, a letter was sent on board directed to him; the hand was not Maria's! all his suspicions were confirmed: he tore open the enclosure, and found it contained the following words:

' My dear Charles,

*' How can I take up the pen to interrupt
' the current of your happiness with a tale
' of distress which will not only excite your
' sensibility for the sorrows of your parents,
' but, I fear, call down your vengeance
' upon the author of them. But this I
' must, before I proceed in my narrative,
' guard you against; and I hope to place
' a stronger barrier before your resentment
' than can be raised by words, the
' tie of consanguinity: for cruel though he
' has been to us, the cause of our present
' sufferings is, *The brother of your father.**

' How

‘ How could I, how could my beloved
‘ husband have suspected that his carresses
‘ and reconciliation were feigned and in-
‘ sidious; that his proffers of service to you,
‘ and his advancement of money, were only
‘ intended as snares? snares, which, owing to
‘ concomitant circumstances, have unfortu-
‘ nately encompassed us.

‘ When that suffering innocent, the lovely
‘ Maria, left Penstock, I observed that a to-
‘ tal change took place in the conduct of Mr.
‘ Edwin towards us; he relapsed again into
‘ his moroseness; he avoided our house, and
‘ when we casually met, scarcely vouchsafed a
‘ word.

‘ Reports were soon after in circulation
‘ respecting you and the daughter of Mr. As-
‘ per, *of which you best know the truth*; I
‘ thought the circumstance too delicate to
‘ mention it even to yourself, when you vi-
‘ sited us.

‘ Soon after the disappearance of Mr. Ed-
‘ win, we received that intimation from Mr.
‘ Flay, urging the payment of the bond, of
‘ which you have already heard. You know
‘ the narrowness of our income; you also
‘ know

‘ know the open, and sanguine temper of
‘ your father; he had considered the sum he
‘ had received of his brother as a gift, and
‘ the bond as a mere matter of form. Could
‘ any one have supposed a human being ca-
‘ pable of such a stretch of diabolical wicked-
‘ ness? Yes! I must confess I have for years
‘ had suspicions of your uncle, and, in conse-
‘ quence of those suspicions, I urged your
‘ father to sell a small estate in order to
‘ be prepared for the worst. This measure
‘ was at length complied with, the estate was
‘ sold, and a few days since he went to Car-
‘ diff in order to execute the deeds and re-
‘ ceive the money.

‘ Oh! my dear Charles, how shall I relate
‘ to you the sequel?

‘ As the dear man returned, perhaps ex-
‘ ulting in having the power to discharge his
‘ obligation, an accident happened almost
‘ unknown in this country, he was set upon
‘ in the mountain pass by three fellows, and,
‘ as he had neither the means, nor the power
‘ to defend himself, plundered of his money
‘ and notes. Thank God they did not other-
‘ wise ill treat him!

‘ The

The next was the day appointed for the payment of the money, Mr. Flay came, your father related to him the accident by which he had been deprived of the means of payment; he did not seem to give much credit to the story; informed us that your uncle had arrived the preceding evening, and that he was exceedingly angry with him for the lenity he had shewn; however, he promised to represent the affair to his principal, and to call again in two days, when he expected the bond to be paid.

I need not represent to you the efforts we made to raise the money, nor how ineffectual those efforts proved; it may be sufficient to state, that Mr. Flay again arrived with a message from Mr. Edwin, importing that he did not believe a word of the story of our loss, that he must peremptorily insist upon the payment of the bond, which, as it was impossible for your father to comply with, a set of ruffians burst into the room, and, I tremble as I write, dragged him to the county gaol, where he now lies.

"Execrable villian!" exclaimed Charles, dropping the paper, "surely the hour is not far

far distant which will deliver him up to my vengeance!"

Here his emotions were so great as to render him, for some time, incapable of perusing the letter; he tried, it mocked his efforts; at last he obtained composure enough to read the conclusion, which contained the subsequent lines.

' You will believe that this cruelty of the
' elder brother to the younger did not pass
' unobserved by the inhabitants of Penstock;
' where your father is as universally beloved
' as your uncle is execrated. They have
' absolutely besieged the house of the latter,
' and several of them, who had been tenants
' to your grandfather, waited upon the obdu-
' rate owner, and with a respectful firmness,
' which does the greatest credit to their hu-
' manity, remonstrated, and placed this in-
' stance of wanton malignity in the strongest
' light, contrasting it with the benevolent
' actions of his ancestors, which are and ever
' will remain among the traditional records
' of a grateful people. He heard them with
' patience, but, alas! their representations
' were without effect, and, to avoid a repeti-
' tion of them, left Penstock the same evening.

' It

‘ It would be difficult to describe the confusion that ensued, the mob gathered from the adjacent villages, began to commit depredations upon the enclosures, and would have actually proceeded to pull down the house had it not been for the representations of Evan Price, the venerable old bailiff, who reminded them that the ravages they were committing were an injury to the person in whose cause they appeared, and that the house might *one day be yours.*

‘ Thank heaven I have just been informed that all is now quiet in the village! but, alas, my mind is a chaos of confusion and embarrassment!

‘ In the present dilemma I scarcely know how to act; nor is your father, from grief, rage, and indignation, capable of advising me.

‘ Come therefore, my dear Charles, if you possibly can: come and sooth the sorrows of your parents! The money, for the liberation of your father must be raised by the sale of some part of our property, in which transaction I shall want your assistance,

assistance, so that I take it for granted I
 shall receive the answer to this letter from
 your own mouth, and purposely decline
 mentioning the rumours that are in circu-
 lation respecting a union betwixt you
 and Maria Asper, rumours which I must
 hear confirmed *by yourself* before I give
 any credit to them.

There are many reasons to be adduced
 that render such a circumstance improba-
 ble, but which I shall discuss when I see
 you, to which period I must also refer a
 hundred things that I have to say, one
 communication only which is too im-
 portant to be omitted, is, that your fa-
 ther, amidst his present distress, thinks
 and speaks continually of you, and joins
 his blessings and prayers, for your happi-
 ness and prosperity, to those of,

My dear dear Charles!

Your affectionate mother,

Cardiff gaol.

JULIA EDWIN.

P. S. I have just heard that all is confu-
 sion at Penstock Mansion; *can you guess
 the cause?*

It

It is needless to state the effect this epistle had upon Charles, further than by observing it was such as to induce him to set out immediately. His heart was divided and torn to pieces by two contending passions, love and duty. Feeling the utmost distress for the situation of his father, and irritated to the greatest degree against the cause of it, his uncle, there was yet in his mother's letter some dark hints concerning Maria, and a postscript which pointed particularly to him, and increased his anxiety. She had not answered his repeated epistles. He was resolved to take Bath, where he supposed she still was, in his way to Chepstow and Cardiff; this resolution added wings to his impatience, he flew with all the celerity which he could communicate to the post horses:—but whilst he is performing the journey it will be necessary to return to Maria, and inquire what had become of one of the objects for which it was undertaken.

That young lady had resided at Bath, with her aunt, near three weeks, when, on the morning that the post brought her the last letter from Charles, she received, by a messenger,

messenger, one from her father, in which he peremptorily insisted upon her return to Penstock, and added, that he had heard she had formed an infamous and disgraceful connexion with an abandoned miscreant, whom he had execrated from his birth. That the said connexion, which took its rise from depravity of mind, and had proceeded to *personal prostitution*, he *knew* her aunt to be privy to; therefore he should take her immediately from the protection of a woman whom he could consider in no other light than that of a female pandar; a pandar to an indigent libertine, a procuress without the excuse which others of her fraternity have for the seduction of innocence, who had offered her services *gratis*, having nothing in view but to blast the character of her niece, as her's was blasted in early life.

He then went on in a stile which seemed the paroxysms of madness, railing against his daughter, execrating Charles, and concluded with again insisting upon the return of Maria with the messenger.

The young lady had received this epistle in the presence of her aunt: there was no con-

concealing the contents from her. Mrs. Wilmot saw, by its effect, that it was a bitter potion, but, till she read it, had no idea of the malignity it contained. When she had run it over, she said it required additional malice, even to that of Mr. Asper, to frame such a scrawl; and she was convinced that that monster Edwin had a hand in the composition of it.

“Possibly he might, my dear madam,” replied Maria; “but what shall we do in this present hour of distress?”

“As your marriage is not owned,” returned Mrs. Wilmot, though I don’t see that it is possible any longer to conceal it, you shall go with me to Chepstow, where we will wait the arrival of Charles, to whom you must immediately write, and who will undoubtedly fly on the wings of love to assert his right to you: but if, from any sinister accident, he should not arrive in time, you must seek the protection of his father, Captain Edwin; you must fly to his paternal roof, and show the parents of your husband this certificate—The Captain will open his arms to receive a daughter so worthy to be adored; and if Mrs. Edwin is

not extremely altered from the benevolent Julia Glanville, you will repose your sorrows upon the bosom of a mother, who, I believe, has maintained that eminence for sense, prudence, and tenderneſs, which ſhe had heretofore over the reſt of her ſex for beauty."

"Oh, my dear, dear madam!" ſaid Maria, embracing her aunt, "your advice ſo exactly coincides with my ideas, that I ſhall follow it with rapture. I will write immediately to Charles."

"First, my dear, let us diſpatch the meſſenger." He was accordingly ordered up, and informed that the ladies were returning toward Wales, and that Mrs. Wilmot would be at her houſe, near Chepſtow, in a few days. The man, who was a tenant of Mr. Aſper's, ſeemed ſatisfied with this: he ſaid, his landlord, to be ſure, was in a woundy paſſion, as indeed he always was, and had ordered him not to return without Miſs; but as his young lady was in much better company, he ſhould make bold to tell him ſo; and, as he owed him no rent, he might think of it what he pleaſed; ſaying this, he made his bow, and withdrew.

The letter sent by Maria, by some fatality which attended the affairs of the lovers, never reached the hand of Charles. Balked in her expectation of meeting an answer at Chepstow, she was every moment in the hope of seeing him. She was every moment straining her eyes at the window which commanded a long reach of the road.

As she was one morning at this, her observatory, she saw a carriage approaching, which drove with the greatest fury. One minute brought it nearer to her view: she discerned the livery of her father, and, the next, saw him alight at the gate. Trembling, pale, and scarce able to support herself as she heard his steps upon the staircase, he burst into the room, and, rudely seizing her hand, exclaimed, "Disgraced and infamous as you are! disobedient as you ever have been! let me yet make one effort to shield you from the scoffs of the world, which you have so well deserved, and convey you to a place where you may in seclusion and penitence make all the amends that is now in your power for your mental and personal depravity."

Unable to reply, he was dragging the wretched Maria, more dead than alive, toward the stairs, and had already got to the door, when Mrs. Wilmot appeared. "Who is it," said that lady, with great dignity, "that dares to take these liberties with a relation of mine, who is under the protection of this roof?"

"A father!" he replied, "who is come to reclaim a seduced, a profligate child! a child who has been seduced by your arts, and has become profligate by your example."

"Had she never had a worse example than mine," returned Mrs. Wilmot, "there would have been no occasion for my interference. But it has been the misfortune of the lovely Maria, as it was heretofore that of her mother, to be subject to the tyranny of the worst man in the world, except one: for infamous and cruel as I think you, let me still do you justice, and aver that you have neither the genius nor spirit of Edwin, in whose hands you are a mere tool, and to whose vices you have been an agent."

"Be it so!" replied Mr. Asper, "I came not here to waste my time and breath in a

war

war of words with a woman whose pestilential tongue has, long since, driven every male far out of the reach of its clamour: I came to demand, to force my daughter from this place!"

"You have no right," said Mrs. Wilmot, placing herself before Maria, "either to demand or force her. Urged by the cruelty of her father, she has sought another protector. She is now the wife of Charles Edwin!"

"I know that to be false!" he replied, "his prostitute, she may, and I believe has been; but, bad as Charles is, I also believe he has too much sense to chuse a wife of your providing."

"How!" said Mrs. Wilmot, "do you dare to add insult to cruelty? Have a care! you think the imbecility of my sex protects you from my vengeance, but"*** here the passion of the lady grew so violent that Maria, absorbed as she was in her own sorrows, was obliged to interfere. One moments recollection brought her aunt back to reason. She took the certificate from her pocket book, and giving it into the hand of Mr. Asper, said, "To put an end to this scene, to

convince you that you have no business here, nor any further power over my niece, you have only to peruse that slip of paper."

"What is this?" said he, tearing it to pieces, "forgery and nonsense! do you think I give any credit to a paper unauthenticated, signed by names which never had any other existence? If she be that miserable wretch, the wife of the indigent Charles Edwin, let him come to my house and claim her as such; in his absence, I am her legal as well as her natural protector."

"I am indeed!" said Maria, throwing herself at his feet in the greatest perturbation, "I am indeed the wife of Charles Edwin! Heaven and earth bear witness to the truth of my assertion! I was just going to seek the protection of his father, Captain Edwin!"

"Where?"

"At Penstock," she replied.

"Then you would have lost your labour; if you would find that imprudent man, Captain Edwin, you must inquire at Cardiff gaol, where you would have been ready to have received his son, who will, probably,
make

make his appearance in the same place in a short time."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed Maria.

"But," he continued, "as I do not intend to suffer you to disgrace me all over the county, and must have much stronger assurances of your marriage, before I resign you to your *opulent* husband, I again insist upon your immediately coming with me to Penstock." Saying this, in spite of the tears and shrieks of Maria, the reproaches, and even manual exertions of Mrs. Wilmot, he forced that trembling innocent into the carriage, which immediately set out upon a journey, in the course of which she was obliged to endure all the asperity of observation upon her conduct which cruelty and malignity could suggest, and could only shelter herself in a profound taciturnity, which she observed, till, late at night, they arrived at Penstock, where she was locked, once more, into the chamber which she had formerly inhabited.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

A FEW days after Maria had been forced away by her father, in the manner which we have seen in the last chapter, Charles arrived at the house of Mrs. Wilmot. This lady did no more than justice to the character of Mr. Asper, when she spoke of him as the most violent and cruel of mankind : She described, in the most animated language, the scene that had passed betwixt them, and predicted the most unfortunate termination to the nuptials of Charles and Maria if she was not immediately taken from the place of her present confinement ; a prediction which we are sorry to say was fully verified. She repeated all she had heard, all she had seen, of the sufferings of her lovely niece, and before she concluded, drove the husband into a state of mind little short of distraction.

He raved, tore his hair, and was guilty of a thousand extravagancies. When his rage had, in some measure, spent its force upon himself, he sunk into a stupor, from which the endeavours of Mrs. Wilmot could not
rouse

rouse him, till she again repeated the wrongs of Maria. This was a chord which, even slightly touched upon, vibrated through his whole system. He flew like lightning out of the house, and mounting his horse, never stopped till he arrived at the gate of her father's mansion, where he rung with a violence sufficient to have alarmed the whole village had they not been apprized of his arrival; but that event had already been notified to them by some of the inhabitants whom he had almost rode over, and who, following in his train, and gathering as they proceeded, formed a posse ready, and it appeared willing, to storm the mansion.

The family of Mr. Asper, acting under his direction, for a considerable time took no notice of efforts too loud to be unheard, and too forcible to be resisted; at length, when the gates were upon the point of being torn from their hinges, that gentleman appeared, and, in a peremptory tone, demanded of Charles, "The reason why he had collected that band of ruffians, and assailed his house?"

"The reason," said Charles, "is obvious to every one, but most so to you. I am come to demand my wife, my lovely Maria,

whom you unjustly and forcibly keep from me!" "I know of no wife you have here," replied Mr. Asper. "I have no *servant* of the name of Maria, but if there were such an unhappy person, as that woman must be who had formed any connexion with you, I have a right to protect her from beggary and disgrace; and common sense, if you had possessed any, would have told you, that the mode you have taken is not the proper one to demand her; it would have told you that thus assailing my house is another breach of the laws of your country, laws which you have many times before set at defiance."

"No man reveres the laws of his country more than I do," said Charles, "but I conceive, in this instance, I have a right to demand your daughter, my wife, a woman affianced to me by all laws human and divine, in whatever manner I think the most likely to obtain her."

"To shew you how much you are mistaken will be the business of the party that you see approaching, they are, as these deluded people well know, the officers of justice; therefore I need not warn *them* of the consequences of attempting to resist their authority. You will,

will, for this night, lodge in the house of the Headborough, and in the morning the Justice will send you to visit your father in Cardiff gaol.

Whilst Mr. Asper was speaking, the officers had laid firm hold of our hero; his townsmen, frightened at the menaces of that gentleman, flunk from him one by one, observing that he must be very guilty, because why, he looked so cast down, and that they thought it would go hard with him.

Mr. Tudor, the Magistrate, was the friend of Messrs. Asper and Edwin, perhaps the only friend they had in the country. He lived a few miles from Penstock, but had been so active in his department, that his name was a terror to the whole neighbourhood round.

Before this formidable person Charles was obliged to appear the next morning, Mr. Asper also attended, who accused him of trespass and assault. The case was soon proved to the satisfaction of the justice, and as he had nothing to say in his defence but that he came to demand his wife, he was asked if he had proper and substantial bail ready,

ready, to which he answered in the negative; he was therefore committed to prison.

The Magistrate moreover informed him, that if he should have the good fortune to get clear of this affair, which was very improbable, or only be condemned to suffer a few months imprisonment, Mr. Asper, supposing his story to be true, would have an action of trespass against him of another nature. ‘The young lady,’ said he, “is an infant and heiress, and you must abide by all the pains and penalties to which you are liable by the statute of the 12th of Henry IV. chapter the 16th, for having seduced and married her without the consent of her parent.”

“Which,” rejoined Mr. Asper, “shall be inflicted with the utmost rigour and severity that the law will allow, and my vengeance may demand.”

“Be it so!” said Charles, “if I have lost Maria, I have suffered the worst evil that can befall me, and shall smile at the imbecile efforts of your puny malice.”

Whilst the myrmidons of justice were conveying him to Cardiff gaol, as the horses, owing to the badness of the road, in which a
deep

deep snow had fallen, went at a slow pace, he had leisure for reflection, and he indulged it almost to madness.

The gloominess of the atmosphere, the heavy clouds that hung like curtains around the mountains, the cottages almost buried, and the trees bending beneath their fleecy load, all contributed to increase the dreariness of the scene, and inspire him with melancholy. Where was he going? Himself a prisoner, to the place in which his father was confined. He was going to add the weight of his own woes to the affliction of his parents. He was going to be immured for a period to which he could not see the termination; to a situation in which it would be impossible for him to hear from his beloved wife, his dear Maria; whom he had left defenceless, exposed to all the cruelty which her savage father chose to inflict. In such cogitations as these he proceeded in his journey towards his parents, those parents who were at that moment exulting in the hope of soon meeting him at their own peaceful cottage.

Although Mrs. Edwin thought the time long, she was not particularly uneasy that he had

had not arrived in consequence of her letter; as she could, in his being perhaps at some distance from Portsmouth, or being engaged in some of the urgent duties which his station required, find reasons for his delay. Captain Edwin had that day completed a negotiation by which a sum sufficient to discharge the bond would be raised, the money was to be advanced in a short time, and this worthy couple, were congratulating themselves upon the prospect of seeing their son in a better situation than he expected to meet them in upon his return, when the jailor entered and informed the Captain that a prisoner, newly arrived, desired to be admitted.

Strange as this desire appeared to them, as the Captain had no particular reason for refusing to see any one, he ordered the man to conduct him to the apartment. As the steps sounded up the stairs, and along the passage, Mrs. Edwin was seized with a trembling for which she could not account; as they approached nearer she turned to the Captain and said, "Surely those are the steps of Charles—Good Heaven! it is he himself! a prisoner!—What can this mean?"

"A prisoner!"

"A prisoner!" repeated the Captain, "Is my beloved son a prisoner?"

"I am indeed, my honoured father and mother! I am a prisoner at the suit of the worst and cruelest of men!"

"That," said Mrs. Edwin, "must be your uncle. You have endeavoured to revenge your father's wrongs! perhaps the miscreant is no more?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed Captain Edwin, "Cruel though he has been to me, he is still my brother."

"And my uncle," said Charles, "I have ever considered him as such, and, however, in my moments of passion I might have denounced vengeance, I should not, had I met him, have dared to lift up my hand against him: but Mr. Edwin, though perhaps an agent, is not the principal cause of my present distress; the blow came from another quarter, from the father of Maria, from Mr. Asper."

"From Mr. Asper," said Mrs. Edwin, "Oh, Charles, then I fear the rumours which we have heard are confirmed! you are married to Maria?"

"Thus," replied Charles, throwing himself at his parents feet, "let me, my honoured

noured father and mother! intreat your pardon for having taken so important a step without your consent, a step which nothing but my passion, and the distress of Maria could excuse; and which, in its consequences, is like to bring the punishment of disobedience along with it."

"I hope not," said the Captain mildly, "perhaps much distress to all parties might have been avoided had we been consulted; for, although I have as good an opinion of the young lady as you can have, it is not the match which, for family reasons, I should have chosen for you."

"Maria," said Mrs. Edwin, "is an angel, I have from her birth loved her as a daughter, she is all that my dear friend, her mother, was at the same age. Heaven send her fate may be less adverse!"

"Heaven send it may!" replied Charles. "Happy, madam, in your approbation, let me hope that when my father hears my story he will not withhold his forgiveness."

"I shall not," said the Captain, "wait for the conclusion of your tale before I make you easy in that respect. Had things been
otherwise,

otherwise, how should I have rejoiced to have embraced Maria as a daughter! as it is, though you Charles have taken an imprudent step, you have, in the beauty and virtues of your wife, an excuse which it falls to the lot of few young men to plead."

Charles threw himself into the arms of his parents, and poured out his thanks, which were too ardent to be coherent; they mingled their tears together; and when they had obtained a little more composure, the youth began the story of his love; but, as the reader is already acquainted with every circumstance of his narrative, we will change the scene, and inquire after the fair Maria, the subject of it.

In the seclusion of her own chamber, the fair mourner had for some time remained, and, except when her father broke in upon her solitude with the keenest acrimony of reproach, was apparently resigned to her fate. The noise and confusion which ensued from the attempts of Charles to force the gate of the mansion was the first circumstance that seemed to rouse her from her dejection. She inquired into the cause. Susan, her maid, who had no injunction to keep it a secret,

secret, informed her that young Mr. Edwin was breaking into the house in order to carry her, whom he declared to be his wife, away. This intimation awoke her from that apathy of sorrow in which she had been absorbed, and revived all the tender passions in her bosom. She exclaimed, "I am indeed his wife!" and, rushing by Susan, flew out of the chamber in order to go to meet him.

She had got to the hall, when her father seized, and, with the most violent execrations, forced her back. She had been hurt so much in the struggle that she could not leave her bed the next day; and on the following morning Mr. Asper entered the room just as she had risen, and insultingly informed her, that if she wished to seek her paramour, he had been of service to her by having put him into a situation from which he could not easily escape.

"Wherever he is," replied Maria, "I should wish to be with him; as I am certain he can be in no place where he will meet with the cruelty which I have experienced in this house."

"If

"If you have," said her father, "a wish to see that villain Charles, I, although slandered with the epithet of cruel by you, have too much tenderness to suffer you to indulge it. Would you so far forget what you owe to your family and sex as to seek the companion of your voluptuous hours in a dungeon?"

"Wherever he is," exclaimed Maria, "let me be conveyed to him! Heaven and earth can witness that I am his wife! You, sir," said she, throwing herself at his feet, "mentioned the word tenderness! if you have any in your nature, give me at least one instance of it, by pitying my distressed, my dangerous situation."

"What situation?" said Mr. Asper, with the utmost fury.

"I am," continued Maria, covering her face with her hands, "a wife in a few months I shall be a mother!"

"A mother! and by that reptile! As I do not credit, and if I did, should detest your marriage, I abandon you for ever! if you would seek the protection of the opulent part of the family of the Edwins, you will find

find them in a situation from which I hope they will never be released; you will find them in Cardiff prison."

"Oh, heaven!" sighed Maria.

"Mark, therefore, my last words," he continued, "if you leave this house, though you were expiring at the door of it, you should not be taken in again: it will also be vain for you to seek shelter in the village; the inhabitants of it know my disposition too well to suppose I should suffer them to harbour a wretch that has set me at defiance. Seek therefore your paramour, your husband, or by whatever name you please to call him. Remember nothing of your father but that at parting he denounced the severest malediction upon you and your offspring!"

At this period he left the room, and poor Maria upon the floor in undescribable agony; absorbed in sorrow she lay a considerable time; at length Susan had the humanity to disobey the positive orders she had received, and come to her assistance. From her she learned that her father had rode out, and had commanded the servants not to interrupt her if she wished to leave the house.

Conscious that in no situation she could be more miserable, the lovely Maria prepared to avail herself of this indulgence. She desired Susan to pack up a few necessaries in a small bundle, and endeavour to procure her a horse and guide in the village, as she was resolved to seek the prison in which her beloved husband was confined.

Susan, after remonstrating some time upon the hazardous step she was about to take, prepared to obey her. She inquired in the village for some means of conveyance, but, alas! in vain; for though all the inhabitants of it hated Mr. Asper, no one would dare to set him so publicly at defiance.

The ill success of her negotiation was an additional reason for Susan to offer to her mistress in order to induce her to remain where she was, but she considered herself so totally abandoned to her fate, that she was determined to persist in seeking her husband if she performed the journey on foot. Taking therefore her small parcel under her cloak, with unsteady steps she descended the stairs, and, attended by Susan, crossed the garden. They went out at the back gate
which

which led to a path through some fields, by which means she avoided the village. When they came to the stile, she turned to take a last look at the mansion in which she had known so much sorrow; and, folding her hands together, burst into tears. Susan took this opportunity to urge her to return, but finding her resolute, pointed out the nearest way to a small town, at about four miles distance, where she might procure lodging for that night, and a carriage to pursue her journey: and, being fearful of being missed, now took her leave.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when the fair sufferer, weak of body, and, through grief, imbecile of mind, began her journey over ways covered with snow, and surrounded with a thick and humid atmosphere, which, in the gloomy month of November, always precedes the approach of evening. She was not unacquainted with the country over which she had some times walked, but more frequently rode. She knew if she could get to the town, she should be sure of shelter and protection. Though the day was far advanced, she thought that the light would

would serve her for that purpose, and accordingly exerted the utmost of her strength to walk on, expecting every minute to meet with a peasant to lend her the assistance of his friendly arm: while she was buoying herself up with this hope, she conceived, by the time that had elapsed, that she could not be at any great distance from the town.

The snow that had fallen had so changed the face of the country, that she next feared she had missed her way. It now began to pour down again with a violence which made her increase her pace to endeavour to find a place of shelter; but, through the gloom of the evening, no shelter could she find. Night, clad in all its horrors, came on; the darkness, which increased every moment, now became total. God of mercy! what a night? what a situation for a delicate young pregnant female? Exposed to all the fury of the elements, her bosom bared to every wind of heaven, terrified almost to distraction, she shrieked aloud: she ran forwards and backwards, as she thought she heard distant sounds, or fancied she discerned lights gleaming afar off.

VOL. II.

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But,

But, alas! the sounds mocked her ear; the meteors vanished from her sight; at every step she sunk deeper in the snow; her cries were unheard; every hope of relief receded from her mind, and her senses, like her body, seemed benumbed with cold.

What exertions will not even imbecility make for the preservation of life?

The fair Maria, exhausted as she was, continued her shrieks; she also continued to press forward; she found, by the acclivity of the road, that she was ascending a hill, and soon after came to a place which, by the temporary gleam of the moon, seemed capable of affording her some shelter from the storm.

Good heaven! what a situation was hers! when even this cavern was an acquisition?

Worn out with her exertions, the moment she entered it she dropped upon the ground, saying, "Here will my journey end! in this place will the malediction of my father be instantly fulfilled."

Alas, lovely sufferer! thy words were too fully verified.

Here, indeed, ended her journey; for, lying upon the cold damp earth, pains, such

such as she had never felt before, came on; she again shrieked, again she called for assistance, but in vain; her shrieks were dispersed ere they reached the mouth of the cavern: her sighs and groans were lost amidst the horrors of the storm. Fainter and fainter were her accents; her senses became disordered; one moment she thought her stern father, with a dagger in his hand, pursued her to this last retreat of misery; the next, that Charles had rescued, and smiling extended his arms to receive her. This pleasing illusion was so strong in her mind that she attempted to rise, crying, "Beloved of my soul, I come!" At that instant the chord of life snapped within her, the illusion vanished; she had only time to say, "God of his mercy pardon * *!" and expired.

God of his mercy pardon thee, O lovely Maria, for that only deviation from the strictest line of duty which thy unfortunate life had known, and which, in this world, met with so severe a punishment! Let us humbly hope that thy venial trespass was fully expiated, and that thy pure soul, released from its terrene habitation, ascended to the regions of the blessed; while thy

ashes, exposed to the storm, must remain till the time that we have inquired what had happened to thy companion in misfortune, thy beloved Charles.

With him, the day on which Maria had left her father's house, had been rather a day of consolation; as he saw the malice of Mr. Asper in a way to be defeated.

The appearance of our hero at Penstock, and his subsequent imprisonment, were acts of too much publicity to be any secret all over the county; every one was exclaiming against the cruelty of the father, and pitying the fate of young Edwin; but pity, and exclamation, was all he derived from his neighbours. Two gentlemen, who only slightly knew his father, stood forward in a manner more essential to his service. They applied to the justice, and offered whatever bail he chose to demand. The magistrate endeavoured to evade coming to a determination upon this subject, except in the presence of Mr. Asper, who was not to be found; but they were too ardent in the cause they had undertaken, and of too much consequence in the county, to be thus trifled

trifled with; they produced the best security that could be demanded; the legal formalities were gone through, and, when he least expected it, our hero was informed that he was at liberty.

The Captain and Mrs. Edwin congratulated him, and themselves, upon this event. The former expected to be released in a day or two at furthest; and it was settled, that the next morning our hero should ride over to return thanks to his deliverers, and endeavour to engage them, as they had undertaken his cause, to use their influence for the liberation of Maria; whence he should proceed to the cottage, and prepare it for their reception, and that of his fair bride, whom Mrs. Edwin said she hoped that she should find there upon her arrival.

Having made this arrangement, that propensity which youthful minds have to give way to pleasing ideas inspired that of Charles with the fairest prospects of happiness. The emotions of his father and mother had in some degree subsided; though in a prison, they sat around a cheerful fire, talking over the past and laying plans for the future;

thus while the storm raged without, all was peace and harmony within.

The vast quantity of snow that had fallen in the night, was, the next morning, tinged by the rays of the sun, which, with their timid lustre, faintly irradiated the face of nature. The trees incrufted with hoary frost, the mountains whitened up to their summits, and the icicles hanging from the eves of the cottages, reflected and refracted the beams of the great luminary; which, while they rendered the scenes around awfully beautiful, told the contemplative mind there was no season of the year on which the Almighty had not diffused charms that might excite the admiration of mankind.

On such a morning, with a heart as light as those of the birds that flew around him, Charles mounted his horse, and, ejaculating a short thanksgiving at being released from prison, pursued his journey. When he came to a place where the road divided itself into two branches, one of which pointed toward Penstock, and the other to the town where the gentlemen to whom he had been so much obliged resided, he stopped for a moment;

ment; he looked at his watch, it was scarcely ten o'clock. He had the day before him, and resolved, though it was three or four miles out of his way, to ride round, just to take a view of the towers of Penstock, of the mansion that contained his Maria. "Perhaps," said he to himself, "I shall have a glimpse of her at the window; at least I am sure of hearing from the neighbours something respecting the family." In consequence of this resolution he turned his horse, and rode on to where the road encircled the base of the mountain. As this was the most sequestered spot in the whole journey, he was surprised to see people coming towards it in all directions. He eagerly enquired what was the matter. "A young woman has been murdered in the cavern above!" said a peasant girl, bursting into tears as she spoke. "A young woman murdered! Good God! it is impossible!" he exclaimed, giving his horse to the girl, and scrambling up the side of the rock.

With great difficulty he reached the place, where a croud was gathered. The whole company uttered a groan when they saw

him, and attempted to hinder him from approaching, but he rushed by them, and coming up to the body, exclaimed, "Good God! it is Maria!" As he said these words, he fell by her side. Strong convulsions seized him; the people endeavoured to raise him from the ground, but his strength baffled their efforts. He twined his arms around the corpse of Maria, and after a long and ineffectual struggle, he seemed for a moment to have recovered his reason, when he turned his eyes to the spectators and said, "All is over! Comfort my parents! Lay me by my loved Maria. Almighty God, whom I hope I have not offended beyond the reach of pardon, receive my soul!" Here he seemed to struggle for utterance, but in a few moments continued, "Oh! my beloved Maria! I come to thee!" and instantly expired.

What a scene was this for the people that surrounded the bodies? Their shrieks and groans echoed through the mountains: who could carry the sad tale to Penstock? who could have the heart to inform the parents of Charles of the fate of their son?

The

The passions of the audience that had been for some time drowned in tears and lamentations, now vented themselves in curses and execrations against Mr. Asper and Mr. Edwin. They then accused each other for not affording shelter and protection to the innocent victim of parental cruelty, the suffering Maria. At length the peasant, who had in the search of a strayed sheep found the remains of that unfortunate fair, proposed that they should remove the bodies to Penstock.

The branches of trees were torn down and formed into a rude kind of hurdle upon which their remains were laid. Slowly the procession began. They proceeded to the house of Mr. Asper, to whom one of his neighbours, who went before, communicated the tragic event, and told him to come and contemplate the effects of his cruelty. What effect this speech had upon the mind of that gentleman we have never heard; he ordered the bodies to be received into the hall, but shut himself in his chamber, and would not see any one but the servant who brought him necessaries.

The gentlemen who had been the bail of Charles, heard of the catastrophe of the lovers a few hours after that event had happened, and flew to the prison where they arrived just as the Captain and Mrs. Edwin were preparing to depart from it, to meet their son at Penstock.

Hard as the task was that they had undertaken, they knew it to be so necessary that they resolved to persevere, and at last broke it to them.

Our readers will conceive, much better than we could express, the feelings of the parents at having their only hope thus prematurely cut off; they were such as produced a fever which confined them both to their bed for several weeks.

It hath been said, that none but the wicked can be thoroughly miserable; this axiom was strongly exemplified in the case of Captain Edwin and his wife; when their reason returned, they called religion to their aid, and bending their souls to the chastisement which the Almighty Disposer of events had inflicted upon them; though sorrow by no means receded, their minds became in some degree

degree composed. Their friends and neighbours had, during their sickness, been unremitting in their attention, and by their services endeavoured as much as possible to repress and blunt the affliction of the present hour.

The funeral of Charles and Maria, who were buried in the same grave, in the church of Penstock, was attended, not only by the inhabitants of the village, but of the whole country round: it will be supposed that Mr. Asper did not appear at it. Indeed, if report says true, he is, from mental imbecility, incapable of leaving his superb mansion, of which, under the inspection of a committee, he only inhabits an obscure corner.

Some time after the Captain had returned to the cottage, Mr. Edwin arrived at the manor, and the next day sent him the sum which he had paid upon the bond, which he said, in the note, he was sorry had been enforced.

Captain Edwin peremptorily refused receiving it. "Tell your principal," said he, "as the last words of a man who wishes to have no farther connexion with him, that an

event, which he had a large share in producing, has happened, which renders money useless to me! and that, although my religion teaches me to forgive him, that forgiveness does not extend to my having any commerce with, or obligations to him, in future."

To have done with this gentleman's history, and shew that by the dispensation of Providence he received his punishment on the spot where one of the misfortunes to which he had been accessory happened, we must observe, that he had lived near a twelve month from that period at Penstock, detested and despised, when he was one day riding over the mountain which had been the scene of the woes of Charles and Maria; the ascent was slippery, and just as he gained the summit, something caused his horse to start; Mr. Edwin incautiously checked the bridle: the beast gave another plunge, and fell with him down the precipice.

The rider never spoke after.

When this event was known at Penstock, and circulated through the country, every one considered it as the just punishment of
a man

a man whose whole life had been little else than a series of crimes. Captain Edwin succeeded to the family estate; and what he thought very singular, found, among many other notes, those individual ones of which he had been robbed on his return from Cardiff.

The taking possession of this large inheritance, awakened in the bosoms of the Captain and Mrs. Edwin additional regret for the loss of their son; regret which they were obliged to quell by engaging in every pursuit of active benevolence. There was a branch of the family of the Edwins that were far from opulent, those they sought for, in order to share their affluence with them; and bringing some of their children to Penstock, adopted and instructed them. But their instruction and beneficence were not confined to their own relations, for in that respect they seemed to have adopted the whole neighbourhood. Such were their first endeavours to obtain tranquillity, but when time had in some degree softened their grief, the principal circumstance on which they dwelt with a melancholy kind of pleasure, was

was the having raised a monument to the unfortunate pair near the spot on which they fell. Thither the white robed village maidens, and their lovers, still continue once a year to repair in procession, and while they hang garlands of yew and flowers upon the symbol of their woes, bedew the spot with the tears of pity, and offer up their prayers to heaven that a happier fate may attend their loves than had befallen the unfortunate attachment of

CHARLES AND MARIA EDWIN.

THE

BEST HEART IN THE WORLD.

THE
HISTORY OF THE
HUMAN MIND
FROM THE
EARLIEST TO THE
PRESENT TIMES
BY
J. H. M. J. VAN DER
KAMPE

THE

BEST HEART IN THE WORLD

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THE
BEST HEART IN THE WORLD.

HAPPENING to be in a company, some time since, where a gentleman was relating the proceedings of a trial for crim. con. at which he had been present, he concluded with observing, that Henry Boncœur, who I found was the defendant, was, from his good humour and carelessness, always getting into some scrape; but, although he had been in several very aukward predicaments, he certainly had *the best heart in the world*.

I must confess it was with a considerable degree of surprise that I heard, that a man with the best heart in the world, had, as I found was the case, been convicted of seducing his friend's wife; and my surprise was greatly increased by being also informed of some aggravating circumstances, such as ingratitude to the husband, cruelty to the lady. The story took such a strong hold of my

my curiosity, that I resolved to enquire a little further into the life of Mr. Boncœur. The anecdotes of a man so well known, and so much the fashion, were easily collected; but I could not help observing another extraordinary circumstance that attended my researches, and which I mean to communicate to the public.

It is a trite, but nevertheless true remark, that every character has a fair, and a dark side; and that when human life is depicted, light and shade are blended, according to the impression made by the objects upon the mind of the artist. When a man hath launched his bark, either on the ocean of business, the ocean of politicks, or the ocean of fashion; his course is viewed through the telescope of envy, or of admiration; and the different turnings and evolutions he makes, become the subject of different opinions; his actions are liable to two interpretations diametrically opposite. The only character, upon which I ever heard that there was a universal agreement, was that of Mr. Boncœur.

With

With respect to that gentleman, every one of whom I inquired was in the same story, and all the town concurred in describing him as a careless good natured fellow, with the best heart in the world. As such an object, if it comes up to the idea which these words convey, will, I have no doubt, be worthy of general imitation, I cannot, I should suppose, do the rising generation a more acceptable service than to sketch the outline of the history of

The Best Heart in the World.

Mr. Boncœur was descended from a noble family. The foundation for that goodness of heart for which he became so famous, was laid at a public school; and here I cannot help deviating a little from the direct road, in order to bestow a few words of praise upon the legislators and heads of those pious seminaries. Few parents or guardians perhaps know, or can conceive, that in this enlightened age, amidst this universal diffusion of knowledge, so much of this blessing has settled in places of that description.

That

That the aspiring geniuses of the nation, with their passions afloat, eager for the acquisition of some kind of learning, soon grow wiser than their tutors hath long been supposed; but it was reserved for this happy era to permit them to add practice to theory, to relax in a great degree from the moderate restraints under which they were supposed to labour; and the consequence of that relaxation has been, that their preceptors have suffered in the vicinity of academies, dedicated to learning, religion and morals, scenes to be transacted which may give their pupils an insight into all the follies, vices, and enormities, that are known to reign in the world.

“Train up a child in the way he should go,” was a favorite expression of old Boncœur’s; therefore it is little to be wondered, that the early vivacity of Henry pleased a father who idolized him.

In the mischievous frolics of youth, in their different pranks and schemes, Henry was looked up to rather as an adviser than a leader. When a row was in contemplation, whether a cobbler was to be smoked, the windows of the unoffending neighbourhood

to be broken, animals to be tortured, or human beings to be teased for the joke's sake, although that goodness of heart I have remarked in my hero prevented him from placing himself in a situation in which danger or discovery were to be apprehended, yet his address and conciliating manners also hindered his companions from suspecting, that, though he secretly enjoyed their mischief, and perhaps their flagellation, he was too prudent to incur the same penalty.

At a very early period he began to represent himself as careless to a great degree with respect to pecuniary matters, and though he was known to receive a very liberal allowance from his father, Henry never had any money in his pocket; but he had what was much better, by the smoothness of his speech and the pliability of his disposition, the means of extracting it from those of his school-fellows. He passed through the first stage of adolescence, praised by his tutors, whose attention he had attracted by the great deference he had shown to their documents, and by other methods which he had discovered of cautiously and successfully

fully paying his court to them; therefore he exchanged school for college, universally esteemed as a youth who had the best heart in the world.

The same kind of conduct in a higher seminary, was attended with the same good consequences to himself.

Oxford rung with the fame of our hero's goodness of heart. 'Twas true he drank; but, seldom at his own cost: never by his own consent. Led into scenes of excess by companions to whom he had attached himself with a view to influence them, by his precepts and example, to amendment, he was frequently engaged in nocturnal riots which had more than once attracted the attention of the proctor, and the head of the college, but, when the causers and abettors of those vivacities came to be examined, it was always found that the friendly and benevolent disposition of Henry had betrayed him into these kind of fracas; that he was endeavouring to rescue beauty and innocence; to prevent mischief, or to repress passion; and, in short, that he generally deserved what he received, the thanks and commendations of his superiors.

While

While the affairs of Mr Boncœur were in this flourishing state at Oxford, the old gentleman received the following letter by the post.

SIR,

Your son, whom almost every tongue is ready to praise, has, to my knowledge, proved himself a villain. The expression may seem harsh to a father, but it is impossible to speak of him, with reference to the crime he has been guilty of, with less asperity.

The crime to which I allude, is no other than the seduction of the lovely daughter of a deceased officer; she resided in the vicinity of this place, and I fear is now in a situation which renders her shame too apparent.

Humanity compels me to write (though equally unknown to her, as to you) in order to apprise you of the transaction, that you may take such steps as a regard for the honour of your family, and the lady's character, shall dictate.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

Oxford.

I. W.*****

When

Before Mr. Boncœur, senior, had gone half through this letter it dropped from his hand; he thought by the manner in which his son's crime was mentioned it could be little short of murder, and he already, in idea, beheld the hope of his illustrious house making his exit from a cart, surrounded by thousands of pitying spectators. When he had recovered sufficient spirits to get to the conclusion, and found that a human being was more likely to come into the world than go out of it, the pleasure it gave his benevolent heart may easily be conceived. Forgetful of the distress of the young lady, his joy would have been compleat, but for the hints about honour and character at the close of the letter.

Though female tears had never had any effect upon him, there was no trusting to Henry. A man possessed of the best heart in the world, might perhaps easily be wrought on to sacrifice family, and wealth, at the shrine of a mourning beauty, whose situation rendered her peculiarly interesting.

To prevent a circumstance at once so unfortunate and dishonourable, he resolved to
take

take a journey to Oxford: he instantly ordered his carriage, and while he is travelling with an expedition which, if he had been thoroughly acquainted with the disposition of his son, he would have judged that there was no occasion for, I shall briefly state the progress of the amour which was the cause of his journey.

Louisa, who had attended a sick father to a small village in the vicinity of Oxford, where he died, had resided three years after that event in the same situation, with a relation, in whose house Captain Percival ended his days.

Her whole maintenance arose from the interest of a thousand pounds left her by her father; the savings of a life of military toil. I should not do that justice to my readers which my situation as a biographer requires, was I, caught by her attractions, to gloss over the faults of Louisa. She certainly was not possessed of that goodness of heart which adorned our hero. On the contrary, she had no steadiness in her disposition, and very little discernment. The bare mention of distress flew at once to her bosom, and its

emotions were betrayed by the quick starting tear. Though she had much greater occasion for prudence with respect to pecuniary affairs than Henry, she parted with her money to relieve distressed cottagers, way-worn travellers, nay, even common beggars, with a simplicity at which he had often smiled. Animated, quick, the child of sensibility, her unguarded tongue freely uttered what her cultivated mind dictated. To balance these imperfections as I have already hinted, I must more fully repeat, that she had a person which the ladies said was passable, and the men, exquisitely beautiful.

Before our hero arrived at Oxford, the eyes of Louisa had made a deep impression upon the heart of Charles Stanwix; a being that had more faults than herself; he, with less fortune, was, if possible, more imprudent with respect to the management of his purse, more assailable by the cries of distress, more alive to the sensations of love and friendship, more open in his disposition, and unreserved in his temper.

Mutual was the pleasure which the renewal of an old school acquaintance gave to

Henry and Charles upon the former's arrival at college; and I should have remarked that if the goodness of heart which adorned the latter, was less than that of Louisa, it shrunk to nothing, when compared to the friendly disposition and virtues of Henry; in fact, they seemed born for foils to each other.

When they had been a few days together, their intimacy increased to such a degree that Charles, with that ardour which distinguished all his pursuits, acquainted Henry with his passion for Louisa. A fainting fit which had seized Captain Percival in one of his solitary walks, at a time when Charles was so fortunate as to be near enough to lend him assistance, begun an acquaintance.

The interest which he took in the Captain's subsequent health, the little services he had an opportunity to render both to him, and to Louisa after his decease, had produced the most lively sensations of friendship and gratitude on her side, and a most violent passion on his.

Charles had made no declaration of love to the lady; his narrow fortune which in-

deed was all applied to the purposes of an academical education, in order to qualify him for the bar, was one reason for his silence; another arose from his knowledge that, among the number of candidates for distinction in the learned professions, even genius and merit, without the support of friends and interest, dragged but slowly up the steep ascent to the temple of Fame and Opulence.

On one relation he had some dependence, Mrs. Hargrave, the widow of an East Indian governor, who was supposed to be immensely rich, had taken great notice of him. To a youth of more prudence than Charles, such an old lady would have become an object of great attention. His want of foresight would not suffer him to contemplate on an event which would probably render him independent. He always had spoken with the greatest asperity of those, whom he emphatically denominated *death-watches*: and when he visited his relation, though the compassionate drop fell from his eye while she mentioned her sufferings, he advised her to discharge her *physicians*, to change her situ-

situation, to seek a more benign atmosphere, and to discourage the perplexing assiduities of her friends around, which he asserted, were calculated to waste her spirits. He recommended several benevolent institutions and objects of charity to her attention; never once inquired whether she had made her will; and did not overpower her with thanks for the present that she made him at his departure: a present, which from the dignity with which it was given, and the manly gratitude with which it was received, the attendant, cousins and friends, who represented his behaviour as a mixture of pride, and carelessness, saw with pleasure would be the last. They had long remarked in this young man a total depravity of heart; the further observations which they made on his disposition during this visit shewed that their former remarks were well founded.

After this digression it will be proper to return to Oxford, and observe that, although Charles, for the reasons before stated, had made no verbal declaration of his passion to the lady, he had to Henry. That true friend sympathized with him in his suffer-

ings and distress, and was by him introduced to Louisa.

A man with the best heart in the world might still retain a considerable guard over its emotions! He had heard his friend's animated description of the beauty of his mistress with a smile, and considered it as the ravings of a poetic fancy: but when he saw her, he was convinced that the outline drawn by Charles was filled up and coloured by the hand of nature in a manner that painting and poetry must fall short in the imitation or description of. Henry was the possessor of what may be justly termed an elegant person, joined to a mind so seemingly polished, and a temper so open, that upon all occasions they were calculated to set off and adorn each other. Without appearing eager to display his own advantages, he had not been half an hour in the room before the company, that is to say, Louisa and Mrs. Morton, her relation, were acquainted with his birth, situation, alliances, and expectations: Charles knew them before; and from the latter lady he received homage accordingly.

As

As I never designed Mr. Stanwix for my hero, I shall not scruple to say, that, upon this occasion, he made a shabby figure, seemed silent, pensive; never so much as gave the least flourish about his connexions, nor even mentioned the declining Nabobess. When the visit terminated, Henry received from Mrs. Morton, who was prudence itself, a general invitation; Charles was informed, that when he could spare time from his studies, they should be glad to see him as usual.

Mrs. Morton had remarked that Henry was captivated with the beauty of her relation. An alliance so advantageous, with a youth so handsome, she asserted would be the most desirable thing that could happen; which assertion, as Louisa did not contradict it, we may suppose she assented to. Charles had likewise observed the impassioned manner of his friend; an observation which spread a gloom over his countenance; but, before they had entered Oxford, Henry had convinced him that his jealous fears were groundless; nay, he did more; through the medium of his father, and his noble relatives,

tives, he recommended him to administration, and in the hope that the pecuniary advantages of a place would shorten the road to the goal of happiness, which he had promised himself in the possession of Louisa; he went to town that he might be ready to receive the wished for intimation, which his friend informed him he had reason every day to expect.

Though these endeavours to introduce Mr. Stanwix did not succeed, when it came to be known, which was soon the case, that our hero was making such exertions for the service of his friend, it renewed that admiration of his goodness of heart which had long been the theme of every tongue. As every suspicion of rivalry on the part of Henry was wiped from the mind of Charles, he having declared it was not his intention to *marry* for some years, the latter, at his departure, in the strongest terms consigned Louisa to his protection; and Henry, to shew how well he meant to execute the trust reposed in him, became constant in his visits to Mrs. Morton's, who, convinced that he possessed the best heart in the world, frequently

frequently left him and her relation together. No man can have these opportunities with a beautiful young woman without endeavouring to ingratiate himself into her good graces; without displaying all his accomplishments. Perhaps the case on the other side is the same; be that as it may, Henry, by well directed flattery, by that kind of eloquence the power of which all have felt, though few can describe; by those attentions which make directly to the heart, became a favourite with Louisa; she heard with more attention the arguments of Mrs. Morton in favour of a marriage so brilliant; she every day discovered new proofs of the goodness of heart of our hero, they rode, they walked, they read together, he undertook to instruct her in drawing, to improve her in musick.

At this time he received a letter from a friend that Charles was preparing for a voyage to the East Indies; he shewed it to Louisa, she thought from their long friendship he would have taken leave. Henry became more assiduous.

In a moment of softness, ever to be regretted on the part of Louisa, a solemn

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promise

promise of marriage, from a man who had the best heart in the world, stood in the place of the ceremony, and her virtue was lost, betrayed, triumphed over, by the benevolent Henry.

The consequences of this commerce, which, as Mrs. Morton had such an opinion of our hero, that she thought his promise as strong a tie as the nuptial benediction, was acquiesced in by her, have been already stated.

The young lady, who had relaxed in her opinion of the stability of a vow which he had continually evaded the performance of, had one day been more peremptory in her demands; he had been more peremptory in his refusal; Louisa had fainted; Mrs. Morton was raving; Henry was replying; and all was uproar and confusion, when old Mr. Boncœur entered among them.

The parlour, into which the old gentleman had been shewn, exhibited at that time a scene of domestic woe which one should have supposed, if there had been a corner of his heart assailable, would have penetrated it at that part, and have melted the whole into pity and benevolence.

The

The lovely Louisa had, as I observed before, fainted, she had fallen into the arms of Mrs. Morton, who had summoned a servant to her assistance, and the pallid cheek of the fair mourner shaded with the most luxuriant tresses, which wandered over a bosom beautiful beyond description, was reclined against the face of Mary, whose complexion, glowing with health, and animated with benignity, formed a striking contrast to that of the lifeless, but elegant statue which she embraced.

Neither the high toned voice of Henry, nor the supplicating accents of Mrs Morton, were heard by the old gentleman, who, as soon as his eye caught the interesting groupe upon the sofa, bent the whole of his attention, and endeavours, to the restoring Louisa to her senses; when that was effected, and she opened her tearful eyes, he turned to his son, and asked him in the sternest voice, "what reparation he could make to a father, for having, in his precarious state of health, and at such an advanced period of the year, brought him a journey of above an hundred miles?" Henry replied, "That he

had no excuse to offer for his own conduct, but that he was concerned he should put himself to such unnecessary trouble, and should be glad to be informed of the officious friend who had been the occasion of it."

"That information you shall receive in a minute," interrupted Mrs. Morton: "I was the officious friend! trusting my lovely charge to the possessor of the best heart in the world, the fatal consequences of my absence soon became too apparent. When I mentioned my suspicions, the deluded girl with an agony that I thought would have ended her existence, informed me, that in a moment when you had the advantage of her, relying upon your solemn promise of marriage, she yielded up her honour. This promise, though I have hitherto been silent upon the subject, I now in the presence of your father, to whom I procured a letter to be written, call upon you to ratify. The descendant of a family noble as your own has resigned her fame to your protection! the daughter of a brave deceased officer has been deluded. Without father, brother, friends, or fortune; she has no one either to
assert

assert her right, or to avenge her injuries. I, from whose imprudent confidence, perhaps, the mischief has arisen, stand in the place of other relatives, and again demand the performance of your solemn vow."

While Mrs. Morton was uttering this speech, in the latter part of which old Bon-cœur found abundance of comfort, Henry hung his head; when she had done, he acknowledged, that, hurried on by passion, he had made the promise she had mentioned; a promise which he said it was impossible to comply with, as he had previous to that made a vow to his father that he would never marry any woman without a very considerable fortune; "if indeed his honoured parent would release him from the first, he might then determine how far he was bound by the second."

The pleasure which had warmed the old gentleman's bosom at hearing that there was no father,

"No brother in a sister's quarrel bold,"
to endanger the life of a son that shewed such goodness of heart, and obedience, as were exhibited upon this trying occasion by
Henry,

Henry, was compleat, when the youth declared, that, affronted at the interference of Mrs. Morton, he meant to abandon Louisa for ever.

Joy now flashed from the eyes of Mr. Boncœur, senior; he informed the ladies that he should keep his son strictly to his promise: thought the whole transaction had the appearance of a scheme—hinted something about paying the expences, which from the imprudence of the parties was likely to accrue, carried off the hopeful youth in triumph, and left the young lady in an agony which I should do injustice to the feelings of my readers was I to endeavour to describe.

In such a town as Oxford every thing is known. The story of Louisa, with some exaggeration, became a theme of discourse; but what was singular, none, even of the men, laid any blame upon Henry. The ladies, to a woman, had long discerned in her bashfulness and retirement, art, and hypocrisy; and thought an exemplary punishment should follow the *seduction* of a youth so dutiful to his father, so obliging to his friends, so grateful to his tutors, and who possessed the best heart in the world.

While

While these scenes were transacting, an inquisitive reader might naturally ask, where was Charles? "Had he sailed for the East Indies?" "No! he was much nearer." "He had been for some time attending upon Mrs. Hargrave." That lady was lately deceased and had left him an immense fortune, together with her country residence. He had shed the tear of gratitude and sensibility upon her bier; attended the performance of the last solemn obsequies; arranged some domestic affairs, and with a bosom animated with hope; with the most pleasing prospects before him, which still became brighter, still conveyed stronger sensations of rapture to his mind, when the august spires of Oxford came in sight; he entered that city. Let never mortal place any confidence in ideal happiness! At the inn where he alighted, Charles met a fellow collegian, and from him learned the story of Henry and Louisa. The passion, the violence of this young man are not to be expressed. The endeavours of his friend, and three or four students that were in the house, could scarcely restrain him from seeking the seducer, and
avenging

avenging his wrongs, and those of the mourning fair.

The effects of these emotions would undoubtedly have been fatal to himself, if a thought had not darted across his mind, that his friends were practising that species of wit which has met with great success in many learned seminaries, and which consists in saying the thing that is not.

This idea afforded a ray of comfort to the heart of Charles, it repressed his turbulent passions, and enabled him to enter into conversation with politeness and composure: the youths observing that the storm was blown over, took their leave, and Mr. Stanwix, the moment he was released, flew to the dwelling of Louisa. He only saw Mrs. Morton, staid but a short time, and then shut himself into his apartments. When he had inquired for Henry, and been informed that he was absent from Oxford, but that his father remained in town, to that gentleman, after some hours consideration, he dispatched the following letter.

Sir,

‘ Sir, the lovely, the, in my opinion, virtuous,
‘ the much injured Louisa, hath, as it has
‘ been truly stated to you, neither father nor
‘ brother to avenge her wrongs; but she has,
‘ what you was perhaps not before informed
‘ of, a true and sincere friend, the friend of
‘ her mind, the friend of her distress, the
‘ friend of her reputation.

‘ When I attended Captain Percival in his
‘ last moments, his recommendation of his
‘ daughter to the protection of the Almighty,
‘ and prayers for her welfare and happiness,
‘ still vibrate on my ear.

‘ I took his hand—the tear excited by
‘ sensibility fell upon it. At that instant I
‘ made a secret vow to watch like her
‘ guardian angel over the happiness of
‘ Louisa—to become her protector through
‘ life. Unfortunate girl! though I can now
‘ be nothing more, I am still a brother to
‘ thee! In that character, before I seek an
‘ explanation with your son, I demand an
‘ interview with you.

‘ My religion, my conscience, my honour,
‘ forbid me to seek that revenge which my
‘ own

' own injuries might prompt, until I have
' found that every other means to restore the
' lovely Louisa to character and happiness are
' ineffectual.

' At ten to-morrow morning, if not coun-
' termanded, I shall wait upon you, when I
' have a proposal to make which, if acceded
' to, may in some degree retrieve the reputa-
' tion of the lady, and secure your son from
' any thing but the future contempt of

' CHARLES STANWIX.'

Old Boncœur received this letter just as he
was preparing to leave Oxford, and return
to his seat in Somersetshire; Henry had set
out before. Various were the emotions with
which he examined the contents. He read
it several times, and at each became more
perplexed. What proposal Mr. Stanwix had
to make on the part of Louisa, he could not
conceive.

He would have pursued his journey with-
out taking any further notice of it, if the
word revenge had not caught his eye, a word
which made him tremble for the safety of
his son. After much pondering, he resolved

to

to see the hot-headed author, a resolution in which he was confirmed, by being informed of the vast fortune to which he had acceded.

It was with considerable perturbation that the old gentleman returned the salutation of Charles, when they met in the morning, who, after briefly stating the passion he had long and silently cherished in his bosom for Louisa, the confidence he had reposed in young Boncœur, his abuse of that confidence, his duplicity with respect to sending him to London upon an expectation which he had learned, when too late, it was impossible through that medium to attain, with all the subsequent transactions, demanded what Henry proposed to do in order to make reparation for the injury which the person and character of the fair mourner was, at that instant, suffering. "In regard to my own wrongs," he continued "they are absorbed in her's. Let Mr. Boncœur restore her to happiness, and my resentment ceases."

The old gentleman, who felt that he made but a contemptible figure, seemed at a loss for an answer. There was something in the openness of countenance, in the stern yet elegant

elegant deportment of Charles, which awed him. The fire which beamed from his eyes he thought boded no good to Henry, he therefore with trembling and hesitation intreated the young gentleman to make the case his own, to place himself in his son's situation, and then tell him what he would do upon the same occasion. Charles replied, "that if it had been possible for him to have been guilty of such a breach of confidence and cruel seduction, he should not have been five minutes in taking his resolution, he would instantly marry the lovely sufferer."

"What!" said old Boncœur, with quickness, "without a fortune?" Charles started, a smile of pleasure or contempt played upon his features, when he answered, "Certainly, without a fortune; but though that would have been my line of conduct, I by no means advise so prudent a young man as Henry, to take a wife upon those terms."

"I am happy to hear that no other obstacle than fortune impedes his doing that justice, which, on the part of Louisa, I demand; as that shall be instantly removed. Let me know what your expectations are,
and

and they shall in that respect be gratified by me, upon no other condition than this transaction being kept a profound secret from the lady."

The features of the old gentleman brightened. He asked Charles "if he was serious?"

"To prove that I am so," he replied, "name the sum, let the writings be drawn, let me leave Louisa happy, and I shall quit England, perhaps for ever, with some degree of tranquillity."

The parties now thoroughly understanding each other, soon came to an agreement. The writings were prepared, a sum, which I have not been able to learn the amount of, was paid by Charles, a messenger was dispatched to bring Henry back to Oxford, who upon being informed of these events waited upon the disconsolate Louisa, and through the medium of Mrs. Morton soon obtained his pardon.

In a few days he led her to the altar, they were privately married, and soon after the father, bride and bridegroom, set out for their seat in Somersetshire.

I have said that they were privately married, by which I only meant, that no persons were

were present at the ceremony except the parties themselves, old Mr. Boncœur and Mrs. Morton; but though the transaction, as far as related to the going to, and returning from church, was a secret, the event of it was shortly blazoned abroad, in a manner that told very much to the advantage of our hero.

It has been stated to have been the general opinion that Louisa was the seducer, it now appeared that the compassionate breast of Henry, moved by her tears, alarmed at her distress, and trembling for the consequences of so poignant a sorrow to a woman in her situation, had determined to take her in opposition to the remonstrances of his parent and friends. That he had knelt to his father in order to move him to overlook the want of fortune, and that when his prayers and tears were ineffectual, had resolved to withdraw himself from his paternal roof, and native country, and in pursuance of this resolution had actually begun his journey, when the old gentleman, anxious for the situation of his son, fearful of driving him to desperation, had sent for him back, and reluctantly given his consent to the match. These observations,

servations, which were the current topics at Oxford, convinced every one that our hero had left the college, as he entered it, possessed of the best heart in the world.

Leaving to Henry the triumph of benevolence, let me observe that Charles, who had, though he did not appear, taken care that every thing respecting the settlement and marriage of Louisa was properly conducted; and who, while those matters were in agitation, felt, or fancied he felt, some relief from the sorrow with which his mind was oppressed, was no sooner, by that affair being concluded, at leisure for reflection, than the grief which arose from the disappointment of his hopes returned with tenfold force.

The homage and respect which his accession to the fortune of Mrs. Hargrave excited, friends, amusements, had no effect upon his mind. Finding that Oxford had become insupportably dull, he removed to London. The same cloud hung over the metropolis. He had long formed a wish to tread on classic ground. He had now largely the means; he therefore set out for Italy. His friends little regretted the absence of a man
who

who had never been remarkable for the goodness of his heart; and whose late fullness they attributed to that pride which the unexpected acquisition of wealth has too frequently been known to create in *little* minds.

During the time that Louisa was confined, in consequence of her lying-in, the worthy, the hearty, the honest Mr. Boncœur, senior, was suddenly taken off by an apoplectic fit. The young gentleman was inconsolable for his loss, which had like to have been increased by that of his wife, as he had, during the paroxysms of his grief, discovered to her the transaction between Charles and his father respecting the fortune advanced by the former. The whole of that young man's behaviour now flashed upon her mind, and rendered her health so precarious that he thought it advisable to leave her to the advantages of the country air, and come to London, where his goodness of heart was displayed in continual lamentations for her absence.

It would be useless to follow this benevolent young man minutely through the various events of his life.

As

As he set out with a most ample inheritance, and the best heart in the world, the first was displayed in his magnificent stile of living—in cellars and stables that were the envy of the bon-vivants and jockeys; the latter in the benignity with which he entertained every stripling of fashion, in the advice he gave them to look upon money as trash, and in the care he took that they should not be overburthened with so ridiculous a superfluity.

As Henry had studied the licentious taste and dissipated manners of the age, he knew that all the tonish world are happier in every other house than in their own; his virtue led him to pursue a contrary conduct. He formed a connexion with a fashionable female who had, like himself, the best heart in the world, and they set up a faro bank.

I have said he was peculiarly attached to the rising generation, particularly to those of large fortunes, several of whom had become almost residents with him. His mansion might be stiled an academy of taste: his friends flocked round him. Dinners, the most elegant and superb, and wines of the first growth, courted

their palates ; games of every description contributed to their amusement, and though the junior part of the company generally lost, he always explained to them that it was their own faults, and animated them with assurances of better success in future. In short no one left the house of Mr. Boncœur without a thorough conviction that he had the best heart in the world.

While affairs were conducted with such gaiety and magnificence in town, poor Louisa, with her infant, remained solitary in the country. The seeds of discontent which had been planted in her mind by Henry, during even the life of his father, which had been nurtured by his subsequent communication of the motives that induced him to marry, and the part Charles had taken in that affair, with his reflections upon that young gentleman, had taken strong root, and branched into tears, repining, and dejection. Her husband's neglect, and her ill state of health, made her readily consent to a separation. She left the magnificent mansion, and, with the little Louisa, resided in the house of a clergyman who had been the friend

friend of her father, in a small town about twenty miles from Bath. Though the allowance of Mr. Boncœur to her, considering his immense and increasing fortune, was contracted, she found it ample for all the purposes of charity and benevolence, to which she applied it.

In a retirement suited to her present disposition, in the society of an amiable family, and a few neighbours, in the improving conversation of the worthy clergyman, the days of Louisa passed with some degree of happiness. She recovered her health, her beauty became more captivating than ever, and, except when she thought of the sacrifice made by Charles to restore her to reputation, her peace of mind might be said to have been retrieved.

Of all the meteors that have of late years blazed and declined, perhaps the most brilliant was Sir George Main.

The Baronet, upon his accession to a large estate, resolved to become a leader of the fashion. Arduous as was the task in the general rage for splendour and magnificence, he contrived, in palaces, carriages, and his whole

establishment, to throw all his competitors for fame into the back ground. Young, giddy, thoughtless, and profuse, he married Lady Bell Bouquet, who was younger, giddier, more thoughtless and profuse than himself. The affairs of a family, with two such prudent persons at its head, it may be reasonably supposed were in an excellent train.

Among the various modes to ascend to the summit of preeminence in the fashionable world, it had been remarked by Sir George, that the greatest portion of fame was annexed to the character of a jockey; and the next degree, to that of a coachman. He resolved to distance his rivals in both occupations. His stud became an object of universal envy; his bets the universal theme of conversation. He frequently rode his own matches. His phaeton and six blacks were to be seen in every part of the town; and he so nicely imitated the language and dress of his grooms, that it was impossible, from external appearance, to distinguish the one from the other. In addition to these accomplishments, Sir George possessed an

un-

unbounded passion for play, the only passion in which, of late, her Ladyship's inclinations had born any similitude to those of her husband. The Baronet, who had met Mr. Boncœur at Newmarket, was charmed to perceive that he had a greater knowledge in horfesh, and drove six in hand, even better than himself. An intimacy ensued, which produced in his mind a further discovery of our hero's talents and accomplishments; he soon discerned that, to the greatest judgment in the profound arcana of fashion, he joined the best heart in the world. What an acquisition was such a friend? he resolved to become his pupil. He introduced him to Lady Main, who, pleased, as every one was, with the specious manners of Henry, might almost have been said to become his pupil also.

How shall I shew the reverse of this agreeable picture? How state, that as the friendship of Mr. Boncœur increased, their fortune declined? and though he was continually advising them against such deep play, against borrowing money so disadvantageously, it was found that, fearing from his goodness

of heart that they might fall into worse hands, he was both the lender and the winner.

It will not perhaps seem extraordinary to the reader, however it might amaze the fashionable world, that an execution swept away all their effects, and drove them into the mansion of the benevolent Mr. Boncœur. I have not mentioned before that Lady Main, though far from a perfect beauty, was what Henry and his companions stiled a most desirable woman. That the former thought so is certain, for in the hour of her husband's intoxication the circumstance happened that produced the trial which I noted in the beginning of this narrative, and which gave occasion to the remark, that though Harry Boncœur was a careless fellow, he certainly possessed the best heart in the world.

The subsequent adventures of our hero lay in a narrow compass.—He paid a large fine to Sir George, and became more the fashion than ever. He made, however, a secret and prudent resolution to avoid the married fair. In pursuance of this laudable design, he became acquainted with a young lady

lady who appeared nearly as lovely and unprotected as Miss Percival. She had, indeed, a brother in the army; but he was supposed to be in the East Indies.

It is unnecessary to trace the progress of an amour which produced, on the part of Eliza, the same consequences which have been heretofore remarked to have attended poor Louisa, though its termination was more tragical; for, while the young lady, who had just been informed that he was a married man, was expostulating with him upon his duplicity, the brother appeared. This was an unfortunate moment for Henry, as the irritated passions of Eliza at once explained her situation, and the still more irritated passions of the young soldier led him to demand immediate satisfaction. It was impossible for a man in Henry's situation to refuse a challenge; friends interfered; the brother would listen to no accommodation; a duel ensued, in which the town was so unfortunate as to lose, in the good-natured Mr. Boncœur, one of its greatest ornaments; for, at the second discharge, a bullet pierced *the best heart in the world.*

Thus

Thus ended the life of a man who had hitherto been deemed as benevolent as he was known to be prosperous.

The event which I have just recorded may serve to shew that, although mankind may be deceived with respect to character; though the world may be caught by the specious appearance of shew and fashion; yet seldom shall we see a series of duplicity and wickedness continue undetected, or unpunished, even in this life: and if the sinner can deceive the world, it is impossible he can always deceive himself. Let him therefore tremble at the approach of that hour when "the worm that never dies," shall, with its corroding tooth, give him a foretaste of the punishments that are likely to await him.

Louisa heard of the death of a man who had long forfeited all title to her esteem with that horror which the situation in which he expired may be supposed to have excited. As Mr. Bonceur died possessed of an immense fortune, her share, as his widow, was proportionably large: But, though she had the means to live in an elegant, and indeed magnificent stile, no representations of her
friends

friends have hitherto been sufficient to induce her to quit the house of the worthy clergyman where she had so long resided.— Though her year of mourning is expired, though she is scarcely five and twenty, and more beautiful than ever, she had declined several eligible offers, and determined to remain a widow, when Charles Stanwix arrived in England.

That young man had, during the years of his absence, led a wandering unsettled life. He had resided in many of the large cities and towns of Europe, but found little satisfaction except from change of place and situation. The first news of Mr. Boncœur's death he learned from the English papers at Paris.

It will be supposed that he flew to Louisa on the wings of love; if such a supposition takes place in the minds of any of my readers, I must contradict it; for though he adored the relict with unabated passion, though the thoughts of her seemed twined round his existence, he had too much delicacy to set his foot upon British ground till she had paid every respect to the memory

mony of Henry that the strictest punctilio could have demanded.

He has been in this Island three weeks, and, as I am informed, has had several interviews with Louisa; from the last he came to town, and then went to his country seat, where, by the preparations that are making, it is thought that a change of state is in the contemplation of the owner.

All this, from the secrecy with which affairs are managed, is mere conjecture. Perhaps my fair readers may hazard another, and observing that Charles deserved to be rewarded for his noble and disinterested passion; a passion which preferred the happiness of the object of it to his own, may think that it is impossible Louisa should refuse a husband who is, what the other only appeared to be, and in reality possesses,

THE BEST HEART IN THE WORLD.

THE END.



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